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The Saturday Review of Literature

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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Humor and the 'Twenties

AMERICAN literature that is worthy the name stands now squarely on its own feet. It owes nothing to British literature except what both draw from a common tradition, and a share of the criss-cross of tendency which unites all contemporary literatures. American fiction particularly has developed traits so striking and so entirely indigenous that no one can mistake its origin. In form, in substance, and in style the differential is so great as to warrant the question sometimes whether the reaction against imitativeness has not carried us into eccentricity. With a national history now seen to provide themes of the highest importance for drama, poetry, and fiction, with a contemporary scene unequalled in activity and variety, the American novelist (it would seem) has only to be as productive as the country he writes about. He is a part of it, of course, and this explains some of his deficiencies in depth and the finer shading of character in which he still suffers in any comparison with European literature. It does not explain the frequent lack in really good American fiction of the rather important quality of humor.

Is white America essentially unhumorous? We have never thought so. And yet a comparison between leading American novels by oncoming writers and leading British novels makes this difference almost startling. A difference in elegance, which favors the British, was perhaps to be expected, and not too much regretted. A difference in honesty, in the grip of the writer upon apparent reality, which very decidedly favors the Americans, was not to be expected, but is there. The British novel, where it has not gone into psychological subtlety with Virginia Woolf, has become hearty, pleasant, picturesque, and a little sentimental, with Priestley, Francis Brett Young, Neil Bell, and the later Galsworthy. It seems a little *vieux jeu, no matter how agreeable,* beside the hard, sharp outlines and new (and usually unsympathetic) characters, of the American books of, say, Hemingway, and Faulkner, and Evelyn Scott. An essay could be written in comparison of "The Forsyte Saga" and Evelyn Scott's recently published "Calendar of Sin," also a "saga"; and let it be said that if in composition, in depth of character study, and in style, "The Forsyte Saga" is much superior, many of the scenes in the later sections of Galsworthy seem thin and soft beside the extraordinary canvas which Mrs. Scott has crowded with transcripts of the kind of American life which our earlier novelists concealed from us.

One feels in these new American writers a sense of power, a scope, a conscious skill in the transcription of fresh and unrecorded life, which is much more like the sensation which the nineteenth century Russians gave us than anything in English since Hardy. They lack suavity; they lack the will to please, which, when not perverted, is a very important factor, especially in fiction and drama, but they make such delightful books as "All Passion Spent," or "Return I Dare Not," or "The Square Circle," or "Precious Porcelain" seem a little like "La Traviata" sung at the Metropolitan; and beside them the subtle Virginia Woolf is an abbé in a salon talking intricate refinements while the crowds jostle without.

And yet they write without humor, and see life, so far, almost entirely in two di-

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COWPER'S BIRTHPLACE.
FROM AN ORIGINAL WATERCOLOR.

The Tragedy of Cowper

By NEILSON CAMPBELL HANNAY

BETWEEN genius and suffering a mystical but real relationship subsists. That the English poets have drunk deep of the waters of Marah, the most haphazard observation will attest. About all we know of ancient Deor is that he had much to lament. A May morning on Malvern hills cannot assuage the grief of the champion of Piers Plowman. Chaucer had far more to complain about than his empty purse. The buoyant Shakespeare of the high comedies surely imbibed a bitter potion and felt the stinging blasts of merciless experience as he crossed the ridge between the centuries and descended into the depths of "Hamlet" and "Macbeth" and "Othello" and "Lear." Milton's organ reveals its grand, severe solemnity when domestic disappointment and political tribulation have thoroughly afflicted him. The tumultuous young manhood of William Wordsworth was transmuted into permanent serenity, but only after the long tribulation over his half Gallic daughter had tempered his spirit. And what more shall I say? for the time would fail me to tell of Spenser, Cowley, Swift, Collins, of Burns and Chatterton and Keats and Lamb, of Christina Rossetti and Elizabeth Barrett, who through suffering subdued kingdoms of ideality, obtained promises of a better world, stopped the mouths of leonine pessimists, quenched the power of the ardent *Quarterly,* escaped the edge of the *Edinburgh,* from weakness won to strength, waxed valiant in the contest of wits, and proved themselves superior to hosts of aliens.

Let there be no misunderstanding: suffering is not the cause of genius, though genius is often a cause of suffering (let the Carlyles bear testimony). Suffering is, perhaps, not a necessary condition of genius. But the evidence is abundant that suffering is usually a concomitant of genius, and that, when present, it always qualifies it. Genius implies sincerity, and sufiering purges; genius implies energy, and suffering challenges; genius implies concentration, and suffering may effect self-organization.

This qualifying influence of suffering is implicit in the entire mature life of William Cowper—the bicentenary of whose birth (November 26th, N. S.) the thoughtful are wistfully recalling at this time—and affords a key to the rationale of his genius. How and to what extent did suffering qualify this genius? Whether or not a poet, or indeed any man, profits by his experiences depends, of course, upon himself. Suffering probably increased the rebellion of Byron; it seems to have accelerated the disintegration of Coleridge; but Cowper it restrained, intensified, expanded.

As a youth at Westminster School he was fond of sport and gay frivolity. As a young barrister in the Temple he was buoyant, somewhat pretentious in dress and manners, lighthearted and irresponsible and flirtatious, delighting chiefly in merriment and the cleverness of the members of the Nonsense Club, who, like himself, had a flair for things literary, and were interested mainly in the objective side of purely mundane life. Then with terrific force broke the storm, which a decade earlier had threatened, but which had blown out to sea at Southampton. The familiar tragedy of St. Albans followed, and at its close Cowper was a changed man. I am thinking now not mainly of his embarkation upon that middle period, that Mediterranean of intemperate and extravagant pietism at Huntingdon and during the early years at Olney; I am reflecting rather upon the more strictly psychological alteration that took place in him. Henceforth the man who previously found the zest of life in carefree social intercourse becomes the devotee of solitude or of the most restricted and selective fellowship. He who had delighted in a bizarre variety and complexity of interests now loves simplicity, and will have no more of the sophisticated city. Interest in externals gives place to introspection, sometimes excessively mor-

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The Eagles

By DANIEL HENDERSON

NOT like a wolf shall Death leap;
Nor tracking my way as a beagle.
Death, the terrible eagle,
Singles me out from his height;
Bides the time for his sweep.

I shall follow my wont; I shall keep
The road he marks for his flight.
I shall vision a goal to be won—
But wings will darken the sun.

Playboys of Britain

BERNARD SHAW. By FRANK HARRIS. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1931. $5.
Reviewed by TEMPLE SCOTT

THIS is not a biography nor is it a literary study; it is rather an attempt to portray Shaw's character as a man, and to sum up his work as a dramatist, as these affected the mind and heart of Frank Harris. The result is, as might have been expected, a remarkably interesting and decidedly readable book. The publication should appeal strongly to all interested in contemporary letters. Harris wrote nothing better than this contemporary portrait of Shaw, and he made portrait painting in words the chief activity of his life. If many of these portraits were not faithful likenesses they were always drawn with a masterly hand. This one of Shaw, however, comes very close to being both bravely executed and true to the living reality.

The title page tells us that it is an unauthorized biography; yet Shaw, in a postscript to this work, writes that the proofs of the book were left to him to correct on the writer's death last August. It is true that prefixed to the work are printed several letters from Shaw in which he tries to prevent Harris from undertaking the writing and denying him authorization; but he does, in the end, give a kind of qualified consent, and he does correct the proofs. "I have had to do many odd jobs in my time," he writes in the Postscript to the work, "but this one is quite the oddest." I dare to make the suggestion that Shaw gave himself to this oddest of jobs more from the charity of his heart than out of fear of what Harris might say of him. This is not the first time he has helped a friend in need.

Frank Harris is dead. His perturbed spirit is at rest. Yet, as one reads the pages of this palpitating study of his friend and more successful contemporary, one cannot help feeling a deep regret that his magnetic and picturesque personality will never again cross the stage of this life. Harris prints a long letter of Shaw's in which he, Harris, is held up as a ruffian. "Set a ruffian to catch a ruffian," writes Shaw by way of excuse. If Shaw correctly names him, then there have been few such captivating ruffians in this world of ours, with so compelling a personality and so delightful a spirit. Whatever Harris's faults may have been he was ever true to himself and, therefore, never really false. He could assume some virtues which he did not possess, but he could not carry them as natural attri-

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This Week

"THE WET PARADE."
Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT.

"RETURN I DARE NOT."
Reviewed by GRACE FRANK.

"GREEN MEMORY."
Reviewed by HENRY WALCOTT BOYNTON.

ALICE AND THE AQUITANIA. II.
By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

ROUND ABOUT PARNASSUS.
By WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

Next Week

CHRISTMAS BOOK NUMBER.

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butes. The truth is that Harris was a disillusioned idealist and, in his disappointment, went, like all such, to the other extreme in his contact with the world. Shaw tells us in the Postscript that Harris "was firmly persuaded that the human race consisted entirely of Frank Harrises." I should prefer to say that he was firmly persuaded that the human race had only one Frank Harris in it, and that he stressed this estimate of himself in his relations with others to the point of such egregious self-assertion that he became reckless in his impatience with the average human being for not making larger room for him on this globe. He has not been alone in over-indulgence in this kind of self-esteem. Most authors have had and continue to have a fair modicum of it. But Harris was alone in a romantic carelessness, in his heedless exercise of this necessary attribute. Had he been as diplomatic in his behavior as he was true to himself, he would never have fallen into the desperate straits of his last years. Indeed, he might even have achieved wealth, even as his friend Shaw has done.

It surely must afford a strange interlue in this tragi-comedy of life to sit and watch Frank Harris writing a biography of Bernard Shaw and Bernard Shaw carefully correcting what Frank Harris wrote. As one reads this book, Harrisian onslaughts on Shaw and Shavian retorts on Harris, one is reminded of Leech's drawing in A'Beckett's "Comic History of England" of the Battle of Bosworth Field, where Richard the Third and Henry of Richmond are depicted at swords' point with wooden, tin-foiled weapons, heaving at each other with dreadful countenances, to the intense and rapturous enjoyment of the "gods" in the gallery and the groundlings in the pit. The gods and the groundlings will enjoy this book hugely.

But this is but a passing vision. There is a true and even an intense seriousness in Harris's so-called biography. He does his best to act the biographer's part despite his hatred of details, but his impatience to get at his subject with his own bare hands is evident on every page. He cannot keep himself out of these pages try as he will. This may be bad biography, but it's good Harrisian fun, though there is much here that will furnish food for serious thinking in days to come.

Harris got what details he sets down of Shaw's nonage from Shaw himself, and he is careful to print Shaw's letters to him in full in which such information is furnished. We are told in some detail of the almost Bohemian ménage in which Shaw was born, and the privations the boy lived through from his childhood to his young manhood. George Carr Shaw, the father, was the relative of a Bushy Park baronet. He was also a jovial liver, airily unconcerned about the necessity to provide for a wife and a home. The mother was a lady of undoubted ability but rather careless as to how her conduct appeared to the world either as a lady or as a mother. She left her husband in Dublin and joined up with a "Vandaleur Lee" to conduct a school of singing in London. The relationship, however, was purely a business one and promptly ended when Lee attempted to pose as a *maestro*. Mrs. Shaw would have none of that kind of charlatanism, and she thenceforth made her living as best she could by teaching singing alone.

Young Shaw, however, remained in Dublin with his father who sent his wife an allowance of one pound a week. The boy went to school for a time and when he left school he became a clerk to a real estate firm. After five years of this kind of drudgery he left Dublin and his father and went to London to try his fortune there. At this time he was twenty years of age and the lean years which followed were many in number and sufficiently painful in suffering to become sered in Shaw's memory for the rest of his life. How Shaw lived through them and where he arrived after his experience of them is vividly sketched in the pages of this book. This part of Shaw's story has already been given in the authorized biography of him by Dr. Archibald Henderson, but it bears the retelling in Frank Harris's words since Harris had not a little to do with helping Shaw in those days of distress, and lifting him out of his Slough of Despond.

Of course, what is written in this book is not always pertinent to the subject. That would be impossible in any writing by Frank Harris; for whenever he can introduce himself he carefully and also appropriately does so. If this be a technical fault as an impertinent intrusion the reader enjoys the intrusion. It should rather be taken as a musical accompaniment, in appropriate tempo, to the main theme.

One such intrusion is especially arresting. It is where Harris prints in its entirety the long letter Shaw wrote to him on September 27, 1918. In that letter Shaw hits Harris right between the eyes. Harris gives a snort but takes the blow smilingly, merely countering with a gloved left: "In the summary of opinion about him by his friends and enemies," writes Harris of Shaw, "I think next to Wilde's was George Moore's. Moore put Shaw down as 'the funny man in a boarding house.' Huneker said he was a 'wingless angel with an old-maid's temperament.' De Casseres classified him as a 'fifth carbon copy of Voltaire who would never be great because his humor was not tragic.' " All this, of course, is no answer to Shaw's letter, but it makes good reading for the general. An even more astonishing intrusion of Harris in this biography is where he prints Shaw's long explanatory letter, dated July 14, 1918, of what he meant when he called Harris a ruffian. It is not possible to quote this letter in full because of its length, but it is permissible to speculate as to what purpose it can possibly have served Harris to exhibit himself thus in public castigated by a master in the use of the cat-o'-nine-tails.

"I've had my fights with Shaw," he writes, "and one was because he publicly characterized me as a ruffian. I didn't know then he was paying me the homage the serf pays his hero. He wrote me the long letter to show he, too, was a ruffian, but of an inferior strain." This may be a retort courteous, in the vein of badinage, but it leaves Harris where Shaw's mocking laughter had been intended to leave him—in the stocks for other people to jeer at. A strange interlude, indeed, is this biography of England's greatest living dramatist!

A review of this book seems scarcely necessary seeing that Shaw himself has supplied one in his Postscript. When Harris tries a feint or hits Shaw in the text, Shaw carefully counters or parries it in this Postscript, always with a smile, and often landing an uppercut with his left by way of a reminder that he is very much on the mat. "It is hardly an exaggeration to say," he writes,

> that he [Harris] ultimately quarreled with everybody but Shakespeare, and this book contains such attempts to quarrel with me. But I bear no malice, as he is at bottom trying to quarrel with a scheme of things in which fellows like me crawl between earth and Heaven, and snatch little successes in which there is no sort of justice and fundamentally no reality.

Shaw is here scarcely fair to himself for even Harris, in his berserker fashion,

FROM A CARICATURE OF SHAW, BY JOSEPH SIMPSON, REPRODUCED IN DAN RIDER'S "ADVENTURES WITH BERNARD SHAW" (LONDON: MORLEY AND MITCHELL KENNERLEY).

admits that Shaw, so far from "snatching little successes" most certainly labored and even suffered hunger to earn those successes. It would perhaps be nearer the truth to say that Shaw was gifted by nature and taught by experience to fall in line with a scheme of things in which "there is no sort of justice and fundamentally no reality." Harris, on the contrary, did believe that there was a justice and a fundamental reality. Unhappily for him he did not understand what Shakespeare fully understood and Keats knew so well, that the world is not concerned with justice but furnishes only the material for genius to use as a means for soul-making. It is somewhat surprising to find that so profound a student of Shakespeare as Harris was, had not read this meaning into the famous phrase, "Ripeness is all." Probably Harris was not to be satisfied with ripeness, but must also have aimed at achieving "success." He did manage to snatch many successes. These successes, however, seemed to cast more alluring shadows, and it was in chasing these shadows that he let the successes drop and so found himself poor indeed in the end. His friend Shaw was a saner and a more self-denying man, as this book amply demonstrates.

Shaw recognizes Harris's gifts with large appreciation. Mrs. Julius Frankau surprised him by telling him that Harris was of an exquisitely sensitive nature; but he explains that his own experiences "which included nearly ten years of apparently nearly hopeless failure, had hardened me to such a degree that I lost all sensitiveness to any criticism but my self-criticism. It is impossible to acquire hardness," he adds, "and retain a sympathetic understanding of how something that falls on you with the weight of a fly's foot can sting apparently tougher men like the lash of a whip." He came to know "that Harris could not bear the spurns that patient merit from the unworthy takes with any sort of equanimity."

The subject of sex was an obsession with Frank Harris. It was his King Charles's Head, and cropped up on the slightest provocation whenever he put pencil to paper. It was to be expected that it would form a feature in this story of Shaw's life, and it does. Harris asked Shaw for facts as to his relations with women, and when Shaw sidetracked the request, Harris so persistently pushed him for information that Shaw finally wrote the letter, dated June 24, 1930, which is printed in the chapter entitled "Shaw's Sex Credo." It is a frank and full statement, but it adds very little passion-color to the portrait Harris had already sketched in the first part of this chapter, with colors from his own pallette.

A reader of this biography feels himself almost impelled to think of the biographer rather than of his subject, because of the striking contrast Harris builds up between himself and Shaw. Out of this contrast a picture of Shaw is precipitated, less heroic, of course, than the picture of himself, yet bearing a speaking likeness to the living original. How far this likeness is true to life, the reader must decide for himself, after he has read what Shaw has to say of it in his Postscript.

Harris lived on the plane of the imagination, while Shaw struggled manfully on what he calls "the prosiac plane of every-day life." But as Shaw rightly points out, Harris mixed the two planes, and thus got into difficulties and incurred maledictions, a course of life which moves Shaw to suggest the following rather biting epitaph on his friend:

> Here lies a man of letters who hated cruelty and injustice and bad art, and never spared them in his own interest.
> R. I. P.

Shaw tells us in his Postscript that Harris, instead of using the facts which were given him for the making of this biography, put in instead a good deal of guesswork.

> His guesses, he adds, were not always successful"; some of them were miles off the mark. . . . Even when he had obtained information from me directly he could not jettison the guesses that conflicted with it, and continued to write with the information and the imaginative conjecture running in his head concurrently and coming uppermost alternately, thereby landing himself in obvious contradictions. I have got rid of the contradictions on the objective plane by simply supplying or correcting the facts. . . . But I have made no attempt to reconcile the subjective contradictions, even when these have arisen through his slips backwards between conjectural fiction and accurate information. . . . I could not, however, save Frank Harris from doing himself some injustice in this book. His list of the passions that life offers to the dramatic poet; love, jealousy, envy, the will to power; passions as primitive as they are enduring, would put him out of court in dealing with humanity in its highest stage of evolution, or with society in its highest stage of civilization. If you are to rule out religious ecstasy, political Utopianism, the pursuit of knowledge and power over matter and circumstances as distinguished from vulgar ambition, the struggle in that pursuit to extend mental faculty, especially mathematical faculty, and the fixation in language, music, color, and form of the imaginative conceptions, thereby making their inspiration communicable, you have nothing left but savagery: and if Harris had been really limited, as he implies, to love, jealousy, envy, and ambition, he would obviously have been no more competent to write a book about my work than a Hollywood scenario inventor of writing a book about Einstein. His own work clears him of any such disqualification. He was a cold-blooded writer, even when his theme was sex, like the French "realist" writers who pleased him most . . . I think that in every case when Frank Harris does not understand me, or any other of his contemporaries, the real difficulty is that he does not always understand himself. . . . Naturally, then, I do not endorse all the judgments in this book. Its scale of values, on which my sociological work appears so insignificant, and the most negligible sex episodes—or absence of episodes—appear of supreme importance, could be justified only in a book avowedly dealing with my sex history only. I never discussed sex with Frank

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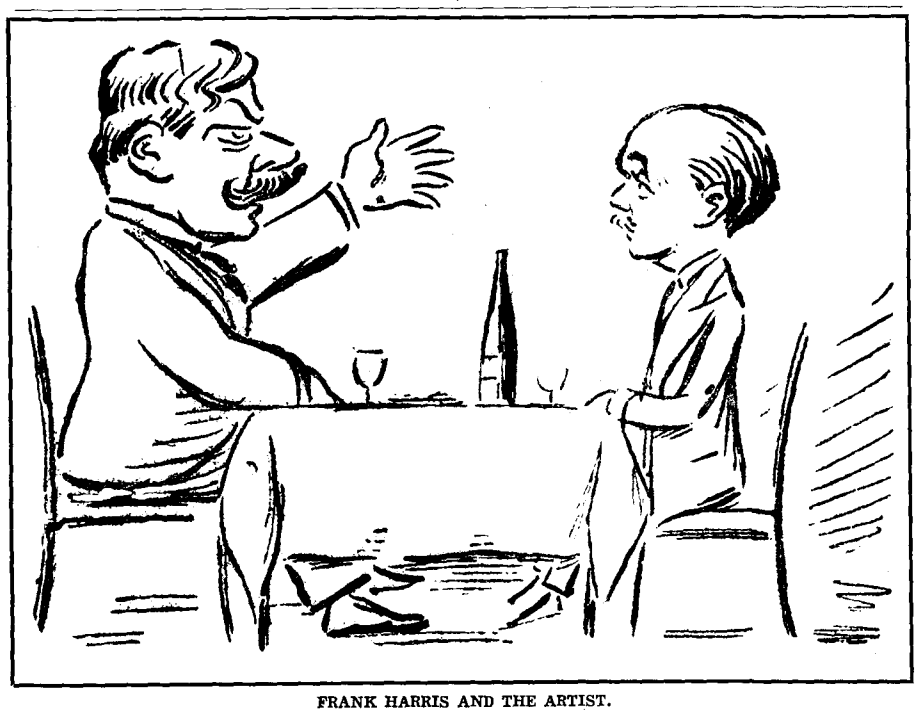

FRANK HARRIS AND THE ARTIST.
DRAWN BY MAX BEERBOHM.

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The Path of Destruction

THE WET PARADE. By UPTON SINCLAIR. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1931. $2.50.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

THIS is a novel of prohibitionist propaganda. It may be interesting (in the absence of any merit in the book itself) to consider the reasons why it is that propagandist fiction, as a type, is so generally condemned. The critics who attack this type of book often weaken their case by giving wrong reasons, which it is easy for the propagandists to overthrow or ridicule. But taste comes before theories of esthetics; and if people of taste are almost universally agreed in believing that the kind of writing to which "The Wet Parade" belongs is inherently bad, there must be some reason for their instinctive belief. Now the beginning of literature, whether it is by Lovelace or Euclid, is the taking of right means to ends; and the true basis of damnation for propagandist fiction is that it takes the wrong means. A narrative for the purpose of proving a case fails utterly to prove it, exactly because it is intended to prove it, and is fictitious. We know that the A B C of the author's diagram is not a genuine and general triangle, but a triangle specially constructed for the demonstration; and we are not convinced. And argumentative propaganda must fail as fiction in precisely the same way that it fails as narrative, since the characters are not free to develop naturally, but must be always Virtuous or Idle Apprentices, predestined to Lord Mayor's coach or the gallows, according to which side they are on.

In the nature of things, therefore, "The Wet Parade" could not be good; but it need not be so bad as it is. It has all the inevitable faults of the type, and some others. The arguments get in the way of the story, and the story gets in the way of the arguments. The story is concerned with Maggie May Chilcote, daughter of a Louisiana family which was great before the Civil War, and by the discovery of a salt mine continues to be rich down to the present time. Maggie May forms her views on the liquor question through seeing her father drink himself into suicide. She comes to New York, and chooses a husband by a process of her own. "One thing," she says, "I waited to see one of them refuse a drink of liquor." This novel ordeal eliminates all suitors but Kip Tarleton, a young Southerner whose father, by a happy coincidence, also drank himself to death (though this is not so remarkable a coincidence in Mr. Sinclair's world as it would be in the world of reality, since of the principal characters who are not teetotallers every one dies of drink, takes to drugs, goes mad, or, at the very least, is involved in an enormous scandal). The young gentlefolk, after some time spent in recovering from their astonishment that Prohibition is not a popular success, employ themselves in trying to make it a success, popular or not. The son of the Tarletons of Virginia becomes an *agent provocateur;* it is a career for which he is peculiarly gifted, since a single drink makes him sick, so that when he enters the next place in search of evidence, pale and shaken, he can throw himself on the compassion of the proprietor, whom he afterwards betrays. In the end he is shot. Meanwhile the daughter of the Chilcotes of Louisiana has become a lecturer, washing her father's graveclothes in every church and synagogue that likes such exhibitions.

This story (which contains many more characters and incidents) is constantly interrupted by arguments,which are painfully fallacious on both sides, on the libertarian side by malice aforethought of Mr. Sinclair's. As an example of Maggie May's reasoning, one may cite:

> The doctrine that the end justified the means was one which people as a rule would repudiate, without thinking very much about it; it was called *Jesuitism*, which was enough to damn it. But try the experiment of asking: what *else* could justify the means, except the end?

The idea that there are means too abominable to be justified at all is one that would never present itself to a Maggie May.

The propaganda, also, is interrupted by extraneous incidents to such an extent that it might well regard the narrative as a dangerous ally, without which it might better stand alone. There is a long account of an illicit love affair of Roger Chilcote, Maggie's brother, a type of the fortunate youth with every gift who never comes to a good end. Mr. Sinclair is always in a difficulty in treating such a subject, since he seems not to have the faintest idea what romantic love actually is, and since (much to his credit) he is intellectually convinced that there is need of freer marriage laws, while emotionally he is one of the austerest of Puritans. He cannot wholeheartedly condemn Roger's love of the young woman whose husband has bought her of her father and keeps her in a jail of a palace; but he cannot approve it either. He solves the problem by making Roger write a book inspired by the affair, and disapproving of this as a bad example. Mr. Sinclair's ascetic nature and his long habit of looking for mercenary motives will not allow him to comprehend that an artist who loved a woman because she was beautiful would wish to celebrate her for the same reason.

All in all, the incompatibility of telling a story and of propounding views reasonably has never been more clearly demonstrated, and one almost wonders why Mr. Sinclair, having abandoned the novel form in "Mammonart" and "The Goose-Step," should now return to it. It has only one apparent recommendation, and of that one hopes that Mr. Sinclair, who has always had the courage of his prejudices, will not take advantage. It does offer the loophole to the author of explaining that the bad logic or the treason are not his, but his hero's or heroine's. For at the very end of the book, Maggie May, "the fanatic," as he so often calls her, advocates a policy for which few men would care to be responsible. She urges the women of the country to go out and break up the places where liquor is sold, following the example of that lunatic at large with an axe, Carrie Nation. They are to "do no harm to any human being," but violent mobs do not always remember their instructions. Lord George Gordon discovered that, when from the highest Puritan motives he collected a mob to protest against giving religious liberty to Roman Catholics, and that mob held London under a reign of terror for the best part of a week. And women who have lost their heads are more terrible than any men. If, in this year of all others, Mr. Sinclair stands behind Maggie May, then in the extreme Drys there must be a hysteria like the hysteria of war, which is ready to risk any loss of order and of life to gain its end, which moderates in both parties must recognize and meet. If he repudiates his creature, then the advocacy has made him guilty for the first time of hypocrisy.

A Darling of the Gods

RETURN I DARE NOT. By MARGARET KENNEDY. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1931. $2.50.

Reviewed by GRACE FRANK

THE author of "The Constant Nymph" has left off writing about musicians who feel so deeply that they cannot be bothered with leading normal lives. She turns in her latest novel to a series of counterfeits that present the smoothest of finishes: a popular playwright who dramatizes his whole existence for the sake of his public, a critic who wastes his talents by writing a minor classic and eating asparagus in the homes of the rich, a shop-worn woman of fashion and influence whom such men must strive to amuse. Only well in the background and already dead when we first hear of him is the greatest poet of the day, universally acclaimed by these people after his death, but so harsh and contemptuous while alive that they shuddered uncomfortably when near him. The satiric thrust in the structure of the novel is potent, yet the flying buttresses of characterization are so elegant and delicately ornamented

THE DARLING OF THE GODS.
DRAWN FOR THE SATURDAY REVIEW BY GUY PENE DU BOIS.

that one is conscious only of lightness and grace.

The story has to do with the unsuccessful week-end of a too famous young dramatist. Starting out on Saturday as a darling of the gods, with three plays running at once in London theatres, Hugo Pott succumbs by Monday to the fatigues of having had for months to lead a public life in private. Every thought and gesture must be contrived to please and to suggest a brilliant, charming young man, unspoiled by adulation. Unfortunately, he begins his week-end at the great country estate of Syranwood by wasting his best stories on unimportant people. Then Lady Aggie, that aging madcap who tries to make hay in the twilight and who must be quoted by all ambitious writers, yawns in his face when he reads her his new play. And presently Philomena, who doesn't want to leave her husband permanently but just wants to take a lover (if she can manage before the parlor-maid departs and the children's teeth need straightening), Philomena falls so upsettingly in and out of love with Hugo that he tweaks the nose of a fairly innocent bystander. Incidentally, Philomena's husband exhibits emotions undreamed of in Bertrand Russell's philosophy and has no desire to show how civilized he is by appreciating Philomena's frankness about her extra-marital plans.

Not until Hugo, blistered in heel and spirit, hears from the lips of a forthright young person that, despite his romantic features and ingratiating manners, she considers him a King Toad, does he decide that success being what it is, he will try failure for a while.

For the discerning reader, however, the story will remain secondary. Claiming first attention are the beautifully documented specimens that the author's pincette arranges before us: the critic who cannot face poverty "because the truth of poverty interferes with the mirage of an exquisite existence," and yet who knows all the while that the flawless surfaces of those leisured persons whom he cultivates conceal mediocre intelligences and narrow, ugly lives; the young girl who sees through the hero but cannot help admitting to herself that she would like to sleep with him; the autocratic old woman, sharp-tongued, sleepless, forgetting the names of her guests, one who "could never make up her mind which had given her more pain, the first love or the last, the first when she had demanded so much or the last when she had expected so little." And so on.

Every page contains these firmly seen and artfully prepared specimens. Some of them, perhaps, like the figures in the Restoration Comedy, seem a little too stiffly cold, as if packed in dry ice. Most of them, however, have been thawed and mellowed by the humaneness of the author's wit.

Chronicle of Consequences

GREEN MEMORY. By M. BARNARD ELDERSHAW. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1931. $2.

Reviewed by HENRY WALCOTT BOYNTON.

AN earlier novel from this source was saluted by Arnold Bennett as "a major phenomenon of modern fiction." M. Barnard Eldershaw, we now learn, is the pen-name of two young Australian women who, as happens once in a generation, are lifting collaboration to the creative plane. Such unions are not brought about by likeness or propinquity, and often fail to develop under obviously favorable conditions, as in the case of the Brontës with their thinly-partitioned, but stubborn, solitudes. We can only accept the joint authorship of "A House Is Built" and "Green Memory" as a remarkable fact, and the Eldershaw label as right enough for the composite personality that has produced this work. In a literary pedigree (always fanciful) the Bennett and Brontë names might well appear: "Green Memory," by "Clayhanger" out of "Wuthering Heights." It is a family chronicle haunted by fatalism. Ruefully it accepts life as a fair cheat, from whom only mockery is to be won at the end of all our dreams and endeavors.

The story dates back seventy years to a period when the middle classes and townsmen of Australia first made headway against the rich landholders and squatters for whom the early laws of the colony had been framed. The head of the Haven family was a Government official, whose administrative duties required that he should defend the newly-challenged, but not yet abrogated, rights of the squatters. He was sentimentally on their side, and this was known. Enemies of the other party were watching for a chance to fall foul of him, and at last the chance came. Haven had let himself be used by Temple, the richest man in the colony, in the interest of one of Temple's friends. An antedated document laid the official open to suspension and investigation. Haven was easy-going rather than venal, a lover of popularity and hospitality. He had lived lavishly and now found himself threatened with ruin from every quarter. His downfall comes at the moment when the engagement of his daughter Lucy is about to be announced. Her lover is Richard Temple, son of the man for whom Haven has put his neck into the noose. Now Richard appears to turn his back on Lucy. His absence from their bethrotal party is faced out by her and her father. But after the guests are gone, when Haven tells his family what has happened, Lucy refuses to forgive him. Proud and egotistical, she will yield no quarter. The sympathy of his wife and of the other children cannot atone to Haven for the resentment and hostility of his favorite daughter. He shoots himself.

All this is preliminary to the real drama, which concerns the aftermath of Alfred Haven's manner of living and dying: how Lucy the proud and cold undertakes to guard the family gentility against vulgar encroachment and sordid conditions; how Charlotte marries beneath her and is almost happy; how one by one the younger Havens escape from Lucy's domination and go their ways; how Lucy at last gives up the battle and marries Richard Temple, dreaming of freedom from her obligations as a Haven, the daughter of Alfred Haven; and how she finds no escape, no

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bid, but destined to augment and to reway of letting go the thread of the past. The ghostly tie to her dead father cannot be broken: "The to-morrow she had longed for had come, but she was not free. 'Richard!' she whispered, 'Richard!' but the other was beside her still, and she knew now that he would never leave her."

For all its effect of a sombre and unrelenting monotone, or perhaps because of it, the tale bites deep and sure.

The Tragedy of Cowper

(Continued from page 225)

fine the wisdom of his subjectivity. The process of increasing individualization takes place at some expense of spontaneity and blithesomeness, and militates not a little against the social consciousness,—never too strong in this man,—yet that process is an essential one, if a man's contribution is to have abiding value. But all this is only to repeat that suffering as William Cowper experienced it was on the whole a valuable restraining influence, destined to have far-reaching effect upon his style and his message.

Nevertheless genius, whatever its potentialities and individual characteristics may be, will perish as unobserved as Gray's mute, inglorious Miltons unless somehow the potentialities are stimulated and the characteristics are disciplined. In Cowper the qualifications most requisite in a maker of lyric poetry especially were intensified by suffering. The young gentleman who upon leaving Westminster "valued a man," as he confesses, "according to his proficiency and taste in classical literature, and had the meanest opinion of all other accomplishments unaccompanied by that," had in him all the makings of a first class sophisticated prig. Yet with tribulation and the healing he experienced he gained insight, and, he adds, "in a few years found that there were other attainments which would carry a man more handsomely through life than a mere knowledge of what Homer and Virgil had left behind them."

Albeit Cowper gained more than insight as the years took their toll of pain: his whole personality experienced a progressive purgation. As a mature man he was ever sincere; yet for many years his perceptions were somewhat cloyed and adulterated by his classical heritage and his imitative instinct. But there is a catharsis in suffering for those who meet its discipline in humility, and such there was for him.

There was indeed far more. Temperamentally Cowper was indolent, and in his habits notably desultory. When he should have been reading law he dallied with his favorite cousins in Southampton Row. For a long time at Olney he pottered about making netting, mending furniture and broken windows, fashioning bird cages, and drawing dabchicks; but when his gentle spirit trembled on the verge of madness he pulled himself together, took up his pen, and focused all his energy upon poetic composition. Suffering and the fear of greater suffering taught him concentration.

As a youth on holiday he delighted to shoulder a gun and roam over the hills of his native Berkhamsted, presumably ready to kill, if all the conditions for killing could be fulfilled. But in later life he almost drove Lady Hesketh—by no means a neurotic woman—to distraction by the extent and the variety of his private zoo. Somehow in the interim he learned tenderness and solicitude for little, unprotected dumb creatures. We cease to conjecture when we recall that contemporaneously he regarded himself as "a stricken deer."

The intensification of his sentiments and emotions is one of the most beautiful phases of Cowper's psychology. By birth he was well dowered in respect of sensitiveness and fineness of feeling, yet as an adolescent boy and even as a young man he hardly discloses exceptional qualities of heart and of temper; but in the latter half of his life he exhibits most delicate refinement and exquisite sensitiveness of feeling. Between the earlier period and the later and synchronizing with the latter came the grievous apprehensions and the painful realities. Thereupon he turned for sympathy and understanding where any man who suffers much will surely turn if he can, namely to the love and fellowship of good women. Thus, through them, his suffering led him to depths of emotion he had not known before.

In respect of insight, purgation of personality, concentration of intellect, tenderness of sentiment, refinement of emotion, suffering was apparently an indispensable factor in the intensification of Cowper's powers. It was furthermore an expansive force developing and broadening the scope of his genius, and so enlarging his appeal as man and as poet.

Thus, paradoxical as the statement may sound, it is nevertheless susceptible of proof that Cowper, who seemed to be ever hovering upon the threshold of insanity, was in all matters exterior to himself one of the safest and sanest of men. His common sense is patent upon hundreds of pages of his remarkable letters. His general judgment is almost invariably trustworthy. His critical faculty, displayed with an amplitude of which too few are aware, is amazingly accurate. His sense of values not only became profounder but increased in scope as his personal tribulations multiplied.

A similar degree of expansion is observable in his social, political, and religious sympathies. When he himself was most distressed his solicitude was keenest for the poor Olney lace-makers, for the sick, the unprotected, the indigent,—a solicitude we look for in vain in his happier days.

Perhaps nowhere else has he recorded this sympathy in language of such elemental beauty as in the following hitherto unpublished letter, addressed to R. Smith, Esq. (afterwards created Lord Carrington), an almoner whose gracious generosity was equalled only by his modest anonymity:

Dear Sir,

With the greatest pleasure I sit down to thank you warmly and with the utmost sincerity in behalf of some of my miserable neighbors, who will very soon be clothed and warmed and fed by your bounty. The note for £20 which you have so seasonably sent, and which shall be distributed according to our best discretion, will to-morrow make light the hearts of some who this evening feel them heavy enough.

Your kindness to me on a former occasion, when you were so obliging as to frank the many pacquets that passed between me and my printer, will expose you to future trouble. It is possible indeed that Johnson (though I have not heard from him yet) may have already solicited you for that purpose. I will not wrong your readiness to assist me, by a formal apology, but will content myself with thanking you for a favor which I account already received. In my volume, when it shall have the honor to wait on you, you will find a family-piece taken from the life. It will give you perhaps a juster idea of the distresses that you have so frequently relieved at Olney than anything that I could say in prose. Yet I am not conscious that it is in any degree exaggerated. We are indeed a necessitous neighborhood, and may defy the powers of poetry to invent a description of our woes that shall exceed the original.

Adieu, my dear Sir,

with Mrs. Unwin's respectful compliments I remain your much obliged and affectionate humble servant

WM. COWPER.

Olney
Decr. 31, 1784.

The exquisite realism of the "family-piece" referred to above may be read in "The Task," Book IV, lines 374-428, with the pertinent reference in the concluding verses:

Meanwhile ye shall not want
What, conscious of your virtues, we can spare,
Nor what a wealthier than ourselves may send.
I mean the man, who, when the distant poor
Need help, denies them nothing but his name.

In those later years, too, petty interests of Whig politics expand into vigorous patriotism. Somber sanctimoniousness yields to that pervasive humor which he had long since inherited from the Donnes but lost awhile. Intemperate pietism gives place to sober toleration and wise catholicity. And, *mirabile dictu*, to the very end of life he steadfastly retains his Christian faith through twenty-seven years of conviction of his own damnation! The synchronism of suffering and expansion of personality along so many fundamental lines is too persistent to be wholly accidental. For this man surely suffering was a means of growth.

How many men with but a tithe of Cowper's excuse for doing so would have developed into utter ugliness of personality, and, if blessed with genius, would have devoted it to ignoble ends! Yet he

A HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED SILHOUETTE OF COWPER BY HIS YOUNG FRIEND, JOHN HIGGINS.

learned the larger obedience by the things which he suffered and kept faith with God and with man. Accordingly he disclosed the amenities of a beautiful soul, and became an ever memorable example of the success of defeat.

Neilson Campbell Hannay, head of the department of English of Boston University School of Religious Education, is preparing what will be the definitive life and letters of William Cowper. He is drawing for it upon much hitherto unpublished material from which the letter included in the above article is taken. Mr. Hannay represented America in England last year at the bicentennial celebration of Cowper's birth.

Humor and the 'Twenties

(Continued from page 225)

mensions. The dark depths to which D. H. Lawrence penetrated are meaningless to them. We are attaining, it seems, the continental scope of the Russians, but surface life is still too engrossing to give a Dostoievsky his opportunity. We have had only tentatives, in Sherwood Anderson and others. As for humor—are we losing that valuable sense, or is it only the generation that came to literary consciousness in the 'twenties that has never acquired it? Was the climate of uncertainty and disillusion that hung over that decade noxious to humor? The American generation that went to war was still deeply humorous, but the writers who sprang from the 'twenties seem to despise it, careful artists like Thornton Wilder, and impassioned expressionists like Hemingway alike.

It may be that these unhumorous Americans are prophetic, that they speak for the approaching grimness of a mechanical, mass civilization. Whatever else is true of Soviet Russia, it seems to be reasonably certain that it does not cultivate humor. Or it may be that they are only frightened, and too tense to observe the individual and the personal still vigorously surviving, and upon which humor is built. Certainly they are handicapped as students of the earlier America. Compare Mark Twain, Dickens, (in "Martin Chuzzlewit") and Evelyn Scott in their accounts of substantially the same middle American culture in the same mid century, and see how the English novelist saw wild eccentricity, the American humorist comedy, and the contemporary writer complicated and usually disagreeable fact. And it will be the worse for these Americans in the future if their hard lips never learn to relax. American literature in the past has always fought American tendencies not to its liking, of which standardization is only the last of a series. Humor is worth fighting for. God help us, with the continent we have on our hands, if we lose it! Kipling thought it would save us at the end. But the new school has never heard of him or it.

A brilliant member of this school said recently that humor was always a qualification, a concession, a compromise, and therefore weakness. He cited Falstaff as a menace to society. Well, heart, legs, lungs are concessions, qualifications, compromises upon spiritual perfection! Yet they have to be counted. We query whether this humorlessness of the cohort of the grim is not a qualification of their own excellences, a compromise with narrow experience, a concession to the black theories of the future on which they have been brought up. A literature without the power of humor is a literature wounded or maimed.

Playboys of Britain

(Continued from page 326)

Harris, because his intolerant Irish-American prudery—the last quality he ever suspected in himself—made complete and dispassionate discussion impossible. He never could understand why I insisted that his autobiographical "Life and Loves," which he believed to be the last word in outspoken self-revelation, told us nothing about him that was distinctively Frank Harrisian, and showed, in one amusingly significant passage, that there is a Joseph somewhere in every Casanova.

Yet there is much in Frank Harris's presentation of Bernard Shaw which posterity will be keenly interested to read, and to which it will point as a justification for its acceptance or indifference to or neglect of what Shaw left it for a heritage. This is not the place, nor is it the time to weigh the merits of either Shaw or Harris; but it may not be impertinent to add, by way of comment, to what has been quoted above from Shaw's Postscript, that whatsoever material life offers to the dramatic poet, the work of that poet will be judged, not by the quantity of what has been included in its scope, but by the quality of the creative imagination which gave it being.

Temple Scott, the author of "The Pleasure of Reading" and Editor of Swift and Goldsmith, was once associated with the publishing house of Grant Richards in London and later came to this country as the representative of John Lane.

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The BOWLING GREEN

Alice and the Aquitania

II.

WE came up harbor again in the pink light of late afternoon, too wise even to try to match words against that cluster of stalagmites that will never be described by deliberate intention; only, if ever, by accident. Perhaps James Bone came as near it as anyone: "The City of Dreadful Height." It is a much steeper view from the deck of a tug than from the high terraces of a liner. We steered for the deep notch of Broadway, as the big ships do, and rounded the bend of the island. F. A. remembered that the last time we had come up the bay in a tug was the night President Harding died, when some great building in Battery Place had left its lights burning toward sea in the pattern of a huge cross. "I'm afraid they wouldn't do it again for poor old Harding," was someone's comment. Yet no man need be grudged whatever light he can get as he heads down those dark Narrows.

We passed the *American Farmer* at her pier: a merchantman of letters in spite of her bucolic name. The other day she brought over from London the new edition of Sir Thomas Browne; and is it not her commander, good Captain Myddleton, who told us long ago that he always keeps the General Catalogue of the Oxford University Press in the chart-room, for momentary relief during hours of fog or soundings? But our minds were on other matters. The *Aquitania* was now at Quarantine and would be up shortly—a full day late, after a bad voyage. *Alice* was to help dock her.

At Pier 42 is a little rendezvous where the *Moran* family and their friends the *Barretts* wait for the prima donnas to come in. We tarried there in a plain, undemonstrative family group. From the various errands of the day these stout workwomen of the harbor came puffing in. They seemed to wipe their hands on their aprons and sit rocking gently on beamy bottoms to talk things over before the big job. They filled water coolers, the men took a sluice at the fresh-water hose. There was *Joseph H. Moran,* bigger than ourself; and *Helen B. Moran* with a small white dog on board, very alert and eager of eye, much aware of his responsibility as the only dog among so many informal human beings. He stood up with front paws rigid against *Helen B's* bulwarks and watched the other kinsmen arrive with critical attention. Oliver (who notices everything) says the small white dog was furiously annoyed when in the middle of his supervisions one of the men sprayed him humorously with a mouthful of drinking water. Certainly it was a liberty, and the more so if it was done by someone on the *Howard C. Moore* or the *Downer X*, who were not *Morans* or *Barretts.* But I did not see this myself, for at that moment F. R. was telling me of his excitement in reading Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year* and asking me (so it seemed to my morbid mind) why none of us could write as well as Defoe.

We lay in a knot, haunch to haunch, at the end of Pier 42. *Eugene F. Moran* had followed us faithfully from Brooklyn. *Grace Barrett* was there, and *Richard J. Barrett,* and *R. J. Barrett.* It must be fun to have a big family and a tugboat to name after each of them. *John Nichols,* however, kept a little in the offing. He was too proud to join our little gab, for it is *John Nichols's* captain who goes aboard the big liner and commands the whole fleet of tugs. The rest of us sociabled our soft noses together, our upward poking bows muzzled with the big fenders that look like a brown bear climbing aboard. Above the soft aroma of the North River was a good smell of cooking. We lay in an eddy of it, for all galleys were busy.

Aquitania loomed up in the haze. Only someone very important could arrive so quietly, so steadily, so sure of herself. We had the oblique profile of her, best for both women and ships. Every slant of her seemed to accept homage. She took it as her due, yet not wholly unconscious of it, for she was still a little sore from discourtesies outside. At sea, alone with gray trigonometry, she is only a little thing. Here she was queen. In that soft light she did not come, she grew. But these were the thoughts of lubbers. The urchin tugs (I am sorry to switch metaphors so often) have no time for awe. They swarm about her skirts and hustle her with sooty grasp.

Our little fleet throbbed into action. It was like letting a pack of well-trained beagles out of a kennel. No one needed to be told anything. The routine has been perfected in every detail. *John Nichols* turned downstream to meet her. *Joseph H.* and *Helen B.* shot up ahead of us with a scurry of froth. *Grace Barrett,* pirouetting on her solid heel, twirled across our bow and took the inside track along the pierheads. Behind this interference *Eugene* and ourself and *Howard Moore* followed upstream. There was a very strong ebb, Captain Huseby had told us. But there was no difficulty of wind, a gentle breeze from S.W. It was pink November dusk at its mildest.

Alice and *Eugene* went outward to join her. She came huge above us, steadily increasing. Now we had no eyes to note the movements of the other tugs, only to study this monstrous nobility of a ship. It must have been a bad voyage, for she looked dingy, rusted and salted from water-line to funnels. High on her sloping stacks were crusts of salt. Her whitework was stained, her boot-topping green with scum. The safety nettings were still stretched along her steerage decks, even high on the promenade we could see them brailed up. Passengers at her rails looked down incuriously as we dropped astern. Just one more landing, they supposed.

We passed the notice board—*Propeller 8 feet beneath surface, Keep Clear*—and with *Eugene* slid in under her magnificent stern. Her bronze fans, turning unseen, slipped her cleanly along; we nosed busily into the very broth of her wake. Almost beneath the overhang we followed, dipping in the great swelling bubbles of her shove. It was like carrying the train of an empress. AQUITANIA, LIVERPOOL! Only the sharks have followed her closer than that. She was drawing 33½ feet at the rudder-post. The smooth taper of her hull, swimming forward ahead of us, made her seem suddenly fishlike. Beneath that skin of metal you could divine the intricate veinings and glands of her life: silvery shafts turning in a perspiration of oil, hot bulbs of light, white honeycombs of corridor, cell-like staterooms suddenly vacated. All the cunning structure of vivid life, and yet like everything living so pitifully frail. Then Bill Banks the mate went forward with a boathook. He stood under her colossal tail with his rod poised like a lance. "My God," said Oliver, "he's going to harpoon her." We looked at *Eugene F.* and there, too, stood one with boathook pointed. Like two whaleboats we followed *Moby Dick.*

She swam steadily. A uniformed officer and two sailors looked down at us from the taffrail far above. There was superiority in that look. But *Alice M.* takes condescension from none. "Give us your rope," she cried. They said nothing. We continued to follow. A breath of anxiety seemed to pass over Captain Huseby and Bill Banks. For now we were almost abreast of the pier. Perhaps that ebb tide was on their minds. To deal with that ebb was our affair. They repeated the invitation. "Wait till we get word from the bridge," replied the officer calmly. The devil with the bridge, we could see *Alice* thinking. Her job is to get hold of a line and the sooner the better. At last it came, snaking downward. Bill Banks caught it, partly on the boathook and partly on his neck. The big hawser drooped after it, five inches thick of new rope. There was fierce haste to get it looped on the towing bitts astern. It was *Alice* who took *Aquitania's* first line, from the port quarter. "You've got to be careful taking a rope under way like this," said Captain Huseby spinning his wheel. "These big ships have a powerful suction."

* *

Eugene F. took the second line. The next thing we realized a quick hitch-up had taken place, and we were towing in tandem. *R. J. Barrett* was coupled ahead of *Alice, Richard Barrett* was in line with *Eugene.* The quartet headed diagonally upstream. The big hawsers came taut and creaked. *Alice* trembled. Up at *Aquitania's* port bow were three other tugs pushing downward, side by side. Seven of us altogether on the port side. There must have been half a dozen to starboard, but what was happening there we couldn't see.

Alice shook with life. The churn from *R. J. Barrett* boiled past us. The mass of *Aquitania's* stern plus the flow of the whole Hudson watershed hung on a few inches of splice hooked over the bitts. The big ship stood unmoved as a cliff, while our quartet strained and quivered. *Morans* and *Barretts* dug their twirly heels into the slippery river and grunted with work. Steam panted with hot enjoyment. *Aquitania* didn't seem to care. She wasn't even looking at us. Her port side was almost deserted. Passengers were all to starboard looking for someone to say hullo to. Lights began to shine from the ports. One was blocked with a wooden deadlight, proof of smashing weather. A single steward looked out calmly from the glory hole. It was all old business to him. For several minutes nothing seemed to happen. In midstream a big Socony tanker, almost loaded under with weight of oil, stood by to bring in fuel as soon as she was docked. John D. ready for business, we thought. There was no time to lose: she must sail again only 31 hours later. And in this, the very stress of the battle, they asked us, "How about some supper?" *Alice* had hold now. Apparently she could do practically all the rest of it herself. Captain Huseby was surprised when we said we were too excited to eat.

Gradually the big hull swung. The downward sweep of the tide crisped in a smacking surf against her side as she straightened out across the river. Her great profile brightened with lights in the thickening dusk. Now she was straight onto the opening of the pier. She blew once, very short, a deep, mellow rumble. Thanks! We all answered in chorus, with equal brevity. Sure! Our quartet slackened the pull, wheeled off at wider angles to safeguard her stern as she warped in. She had pivoted round the corner and was slowly easing against the camels, those floating rafts that keep her from rubbing. Captain Huseby now did his steering from the wheel at *Alice's* stern. The rest were at supper.

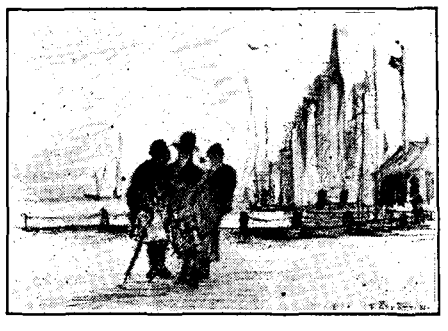
It was blue dark, 5:10 p.m. New Jersey had vanished except for the bright words LIPTON'S TEA. *Aquitania's* stern was flush with the outer end of the pier. Her ensign came down. We could hardly believe it was all over.

Bill Paton was a little disappointed we could not stay for supper. But we had seen too much—and eaten too much lunch—to be hungry yet. "Next time let us know a day ahead," he remarked, "and we can really give you a meal." We tried to compliment the deck-hand on his sure skill with a hawser. He was embarrassed. "I'm glad you were pleased," was his modest reply. They put us ashore at the end of the pier.

Why do people build or buy big steam yachts, we wondered. Surely a tugboat is the perfect craft. They build them on the Great Lakes—Green Bay, I think they said, was where *Alice* came from. You can get one like her for something like $100,000. A maiden voyage in a tugboat from Green Bay to New York would be a good trip to take.

Aquitania lay there, a blaze of lights, stewards busy carrying off baggage. *Alice* backed off with a curtseying motion, and vanished into the dark. She sleeps in Brooklyn.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.



DRAWN BY FRANKLIN ABBOTT

A Diplomat's Memories

MY YESTERDAYS. By LORD FREDERIC HAMILTON. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1931. $2.50.

THIS is a one-volume reprint, from the original plates, of the three books of reminiscence, "The Vanished Pomps of Yesterday," "The Days before Yesterday," and "Here, There and Everywhere." Lord Frederick Hamilton was son of a Duke and brought up in the full tradition of his caste. Family routine sent him to Harrow: this book contains a devoutly Harrovian chapter of old-boy memories. But instead of going up to Cambridge or Oxford he entered the diplomatic service. He was built for a man of the world, not a scholar, and became a shining example of the public school Briton at his best.

But he is more than a type. With all his easy acceptance of rank, its privileges and responsibilities, he has a private humor and gusto of living that protect him from anything like pretence or snobbery. He likes pomp and circumstance on occasion, and registers with a sigh the passing of the old régime, when in royalty the world possessed at least an ornament above the doorway of the commonplace. But he likes human beings and human nature more.

His birth gave him entry to the English court in boyhood. At twenty he went to Berlin as a full-fledged attaché. He observed with amusement the frugality of the Prussian, his reserve, his secret dislike of England. He watched the great Wagner being cosseted by princesses, heard him play, as well as Liszt, in private: met Bismarck, then master of Europe, a friendly visitor at the British embassy. He tells some entertaining stories of court life and vividly describes the formalities of court feasts and functions. From Berlin he was despatched to Austria, thence to Russia and elsewhere, so that in these pages you may find an extraordinary picture of nineteenth century royalty as a sort of panorama shifting from country to country but always with the same dominating figures in the foreground.

This British diplomat also functioned in his time in Brazil and the Argentine, in Canada and Calcutta. With him he carried always his English aplomb but also his inexhaustible interest in people and his relish for human contacts of all sorts. The third part of this volume, "Here, There, and Everywhere," is a random record of his unofficial travels and adventures in many lands and seas. The chapters on the West Indies and the Spanish Main are particularly readable. There is nothing startling in this book, from first to last, but it is so unassuming, so genial, so well-bred and tolerant, even of those changes which have already made of it a chronicle of dead things—as to rank among the best of modern "memoirs."

Incidentally the book yields quite a body of evidence about the manners and speech of a class and a period which we know chiefly through the more or less fanciful eyes of the novelists. This passage is especially interesting in view of certain alleged "Yankeeisms" and "Southernisms." The aunts in question were noblewomen of the highest rank and breeding:

In the 'seventies some of the curious tricks of pronunciation of the eighteenth century still survived. My aunts, who had been born with or before the nineteenth century, invariably pronounced "yellow" as "yaller," "lilac" and "cucumber" became "laylock" and "cowcumber," and a gold bracelet was referred to as a "goold brasslet."

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Some Recent Fiction

Sarah Defiant

SARAH DEFIANT. By MARY BORDEN. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1931. $2.50.

Reviewed by TAYLOR SCOTT HARDIN

LIKE "Three Pilgrims and a Tinker," this latest of Mary Borden's novels has great charm. Again she has a story; again she knows how to tell it. It's about a simple English woman (daughter of a vicar, wife of a lord, mother of two children) who, during the war, while her husband is off on active service, turns nurse, goes to the front, falls in with an attractive British captain, and causes a great to-do by her ensuing love for him. At first she is "good"—even breaks off with the captain when matters get to a point. But when her husband returns and she meets him in Paris, she finds him old and insufferably dull. It won't work; so, against his lordship's stormy protests, she is quick to flee to her gay young captain when word comes that he has just been seriously wounded. She finds him minus a leg. Then comes Armistice. His lordship will not grant his wife a divorce. Defiant, she shocks her high, moral relations by deserting husband and children to go and live with the captain, who soon takes her to Paris.

Half of the story is laid against that gay, carefree effervescence which the French capital was just after the war—diplomats, aristocrats, smart parties, and *femmes fatales*. Here the young lovers move and have their being—until word comes to the heroine that one of her children lies ill at home. Whereupon she returns and for a variety of reasons has to remain about a year. Meantime in Paris the wooden-legged captain thinks (wrongly) that she has deserted him. He is in the midst of an affair with a famous French female when his English lady (after her husband's death) returns. And now the stage is set for a beautiful climax. There is shooting, of course, and all that, but it's a *dénoûement* in the manner of the *comédie française*, so no serious harm is done; and then Paris peters out into dulness, and the lovers return to England, and are joined at last in holy matrimony. All of which is as it should be.

In this book, Mary Borden once again proves that she can write. There's a glibness, a freshness, a delight to her style which is as friendly as it is persuasive. Her thoughts trip along nimbly on top of a rich flow of simple, well-chosen words. There is no one who can do her kind of "light" writing with quite the same grace and good taste; and there is hardly any one who has a better sense of catching portraits and atmospheres with quite the same easy economy. Her phrases, always so simple, are often startling in their happiness—as when she says of her heroine that her face became "foolish with misery." In one full sweep we get Lord Howick. With deftness we get his Palladian house in England, including the children and their faithful old governess, Mathilda Browning. Mary Borden is always superb when she deals with children. But in this book she's even more superb in her handling of the Paris scene, which she does with a delicious familiarity, not only the city, but its smart set as well.

Mary Borden seems to have been born with a sense of narrative sequence, which, like an ear for music, is an innate trait, I think, and not an acquired one. Furthermore, she is an admirable judge of pace. She avoids chronological concatenation whenever it gets in the way of her story, introduces variety just when the reader is ready for it, steps up the tempo when things are happening, slows it down when rest is needed. Her descriptions never seem static. They sneak into the dynamic web, almost unobserved. Her dialogue is excellent—choice spots of it, in just the right places. "Sarah Defiant" is a comedy of manners which reads like a charm. A hundred years from now scholars may conceivably go back to it as they now go back to "Evelina" and Jane Austen.

Eighteen Varieties

MR. FOTHERGILL'S PLOT. By Eighteen Authors. New York: Oxford University Press. 1931. $2.50.

Reviewed by GLADYS GRAHAM

THE first work of fiction from the Oxford University Press presents both a new idea and an imposing list of authors. The jacket explains, with or without its tongue in its cheek, that Mr. Fothergill is the literary-artist landlord of an old Coaching Inn near Oxford, where English authors are wont to enjoy his hospitality. And when one morning he

> jumped from his bed
> with a plot in his head

he very wisely decided to put it to work. He gave it to eighteen authors, the Conspirators, each of whom wrote a version of it in short story form. The stories were collected and are presented in "Mr. Fothergill's Plot."

The eighteen coöperative authors are: Martin Armstrong, H. R. Barbor, Elizabeth Bowen, Gerald Bullett, Thomas Burke, G. K. Chesterton, A. E. Coppard, E. M. Delafield, L. P. Hartley, Storm Jameson, Sheila Kaye-Smith, Margaret Kennedy, Edward Shanks, Helen Simpson, J. C. Squire, L. A. G. Strong, Frank Swinnerton, and Rebecca West.

The plot as given out read:

> A man gets into correspondence with a woman he doesn't know and finds romance in it, until he meets a girl, falls in love with her in the ordinary way, marries her, and drops the mysterious correspondence. But after a period of happiness comes dissatisfaction. He writes again to the unknown woman and finds consolation till by an accident it is discovered that the married couple are writing to one another.

Upon this theme the gamut of variations is run. Sometimes, as in "They That Sit in Darkness," by Rebecca West, it is almost lost sight of in the subtle drawing of a character wherein the distinction between the actual and not-actual is so blurred that an intense sincerity and fraudulent mediumship are possible in the same life-beleaguered individual, or, as in "A Mingled Strain," by Storm Jameson—which, despite its lack of length, reads like a novel—so fully developed is the central character, Jew-artist-lover-businessman. One story begins with the great Low Brow movement at Oxford and ends in suicide. In a "Quartette for Two Voices" the author omits the marriage ceremony in a tight-knit and thoroughly modern version of the story. The reader is not surprised to find that Mr. Swinnerton calls his characteristic sketch "Percy and Pansy," nor that Thomas Burke sets his in Xanadu. Martin Armstrong gives the plot an extra turn, developing the woman's character along lines that fringe the edges of every little art circle today. Some of the authors have approached their subject in the lighter vein, others have indulged in rosy sentimentality, but most of them have crashed head-on into a psychological situation that has as many outcomes and causes as there are authors to view it.

In an interesting and suggestive foreword, called "The Showman's Speech," Mr. R. G. Collingwood points out that the idea behind "Mr. Fothergill's Plot" is the idea that underlay Greek art. The Greek dramatists were content to tell old stories, already familiar to their audience, in new ways. The sculptors, too, told old stories in their marbles. Mr. Collingwood believes that the distinction between classical and romantic art lies just here. "To be interested in a work of art on account of what it says, is to treat it as romantic art; to be interested on account of how it says it, is to treat it as classical.

The conspirators, then, in Mr. Fothergill's plot have approached their work in the classical spirit! But the readers? They are much more likely to take the cash of eighteen remarkably good short stories and let the classical credit go.

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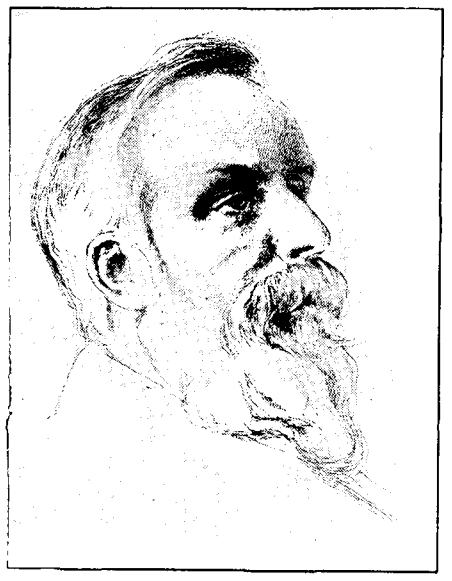
Round About Parnassus

By WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THERE are several distinguished poets in England who never seem to have made any impression upon the American public, though poets themselves know their work and regard them highly for several qualities. Lascelles Abercrombie is such a poet, and so is T. Sturge Moore, the first volume of whose *Poems. Collected Edition* has now come from Macmillan. Charging five dollars for a book at this particular time is warranted vastly to decrease its sale, but this is the edition printed in Great Britain at The Alcuin Press, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, with a frontispiece of the poet after a drawing by Charles Shannon, R. A., and we shrewdly suspect that Sturge Moore himself designed the jacket as, indeed, he did the cover for the collected poems of W. B. Yeats; for Mr. Moore is the possessor of not one but several notable talents.

This poet really repays acquaintance, just as—while the younger generation chose to ignore him—Robert Bridges lav-



T. STURGE MOORE

ishly repaid it to the really instructed. I do not myself think Moore to be nearly so fine as Bridges, and, to judge him by this one volume, there is certainly nothing in it that can rank with Bridges's best. Seemingly quite unaffected by the weeding of clichés from poetic parlance, which the poets just before the Great War were vigorously attempting, Sturge Moore allows himself expressions that are often simply weak and banal. He also does occasional almost incredibly jingly things with his versification. In a poem called "She," for instance,

When, slim and straight as a fir-tree,
She carried that teeming head,
On the dignity of her bearing
Da Vinci's eyes might have fed

is simply horrible doggerel and tumpty-tum. I myself think that, save as he was fond of curiosities of nature, Da Vinci's eyes would have been very loth indeed to feed on any such lady, with a form apparently needing deforestation and a brain like a boiling tea-kettle. We might as well face the fact at once that Sturge Moore at his worst can give even the worst of Wordsworth cards and spades. Again, some readers will be turned aside by the fact that Sturge Moore writes poetic drama upon such subjects as "Roderigo of Bivar" and "Absalom, a Chronicle Play." And they look rather portentous. But persevere into them, and one begins to realize that we have encountered not only a noble accent but a combination of erudition and powerful language which is sufficiently rare. In his blank verse, of course, Moore does not sufficiently eschew the involvedly inverted line; for instance, "All hued as clouds are that the morning face," when the direct way of saying it would have been "colored like the clouds that face the morning." The use of the word "face," of course, is bad. And inasmuch as the poet is speaking of the limbs of the lady in Titian's "Bacchanal," the bringing in of clouds irresistibly makes us feel that they must have possessed a certain cottony quality quite alien to actual flesh-and-blood limbs. Certainly one does not read Sturge Moore to note the precision of phrase or certainty of accent, but because in his loosely knit verse some spontaneity occasionally falls out very fortunately. For instance, this is an oddity of expression that is, nevertheless, most refreshing:

My life feels like a mouse
In some strange giant's house;
Or like a single fly
In a Saharan sky:
Small part in life have I,
Yet of one sort with it whole,
Is my small soul.

The poem "Water," beginning with the line, "Tell me what hath water done?" is worthy of Blake, and Sturge Moore has written poems for children, in "The Little School," which have great charm, notably the popular one, "Beautiful Meals," beginning:

How nice it is to eat!
All creatures love it so—

A poem like "Summer Lightning" is a spontaneous success, and "A Prayer," in its three sections has true poetic intensity and fire. I shall look with interest for the further volumes of Sturge Moore's collected work.

Minnie Maylow's Story, and Other Tales and Scenes, (Macmillan) is, frankly, a disappointment from John Masefield. Of Tristan, even of Penelope, he sings again. He draws much on old legend. He dramatizes Richard Whittington. There is enough force still in his pen to make us take considerable notice were he a new poet, but not since he is the master-poet who wrote "Dauber," "Reynard the Fox," and "The Hounds of Hell." The particular poem that took most hold upon my imagination was the incident of Evan Roberts, A. B., a rhymed account of an actual act of heroism. And this was as much for the prose explanations that begin and end it as for the verse which, nevertheless, put nautical terminology to the vivid use that only Masefield, since Kipling, can make of it.

To Whom Else? printed at The Seizin Press, Deyá, Majorca, is by Robert Graves under the new dispensation which I have never made any bones about saying I do not like as much as his previous incarnation just after the war. He begins by describing his travels from "guest-house to guest-house" and throwing his keys to those

Who find perfection and eternity
In better or worse, a roof over the head
And any half-loaf better than no bread
For which to thank God on their knees
nightly.

I don't think much of his "As It Were Poems," but I like "Devilishly Disturbed," "The Legs," and "Ogres and Pygmies," the last best. This large-paged volume is, however, pretty poor beside his earlier books.

We wish to mention in passing *The Junior Poetry Cure,* compiled and edited by Robert Haven Schauffler and an excellent companion anthology, for youngsters, to his *The Poetry Cure* which was designed for adults. Dodd, Mead & Company publishes this illustrated book. Glenn Ward Dresbach's *Selected Poems* (Holt) is the gathering together of the work of an outdoor poet who is above the average without being among the leaders. His choices from his own work are good. Alexander Falconer Murison's rendering of Horace into English verse (Longmans, Green) seems to me good scholarship but uninspired. *An Anthology of Augustan Poetry* 1700-1751 (Macmillan), compiled and edited by Frederick T. Wood, who formerly edited "The Poems of Henry Carey," seems to me just another of those rather similar collections that clog library shelves. Mary Hoxie Jones is a new poet, but in *Arrows of Desire* (Macmillan) I cannot find anything of great moment. Virginia Kent Cummins's *On Wind of Chance* (Putnam), illustrated by Ruth Reeves, hardly rises above the level of respectable magazine verse. I acknowledge receipt of *Shards and Scarabs from Egypt,* by Caroline Hazard (The Harbor Press, Inc., 305 East 45th Street), together with its companion volume, *The Homing,* which we have already reviewed in this department; *The Oxford Lists and Other Poems,* by H. C. Boultbee (Toronto: Oxford University Press); *Rain on the Roof,* by Anna Balmer Myers (Poetry Publishers, Philadelphia, Pa.), *Candle Flowers,* by Blanche Lee (New York: James T. White); *Florida Poets,* an anthology with a foreword by Vivian Yeiser Laramore and *The Red Trail,* by J. G. Eble (Harrison).

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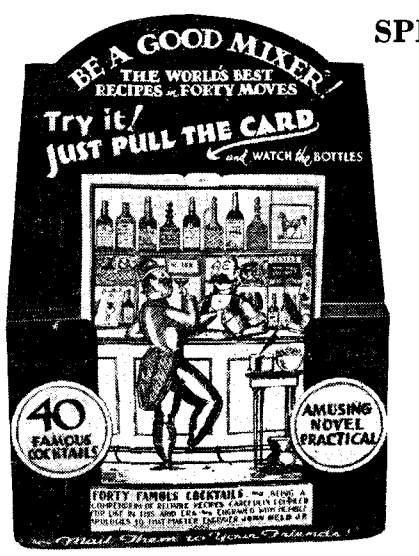
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Literature in Australia

By NORMAN LINDSAY

AUSTRALIA is a country packed into a too-violent time factor for a clarified analysis of its present state of mind. In a century it has had to leap from medievalism to modernism; from the convict system to the poetry of Hugh McCrae.

In a rough way its social periods have been defined by certain books, though as yet the process of a century has not been assimilated by Australian consciousness, since there have not been enough books produced there to define it, and Australia is in a morbid state of terror lest such books should be produced. In a queer way, its present effort to suppress a freed outlook on life reflects its initial system of suppressing freed movement in life; an exchange of leg irons for literary censorships.

No country can have a moral existence till it has been defined as the material for art. Australia has good material, in spite of its limited time factor. Up to the 'fifties, its growth was a slow shuffling in social stratas between the officials of the system, convicts, emancipists, and free settlers. The gold rush of the 'fifties splashed it with sudden violence and color, with the feverish settlement of mining towns, the gambling mania, easy wealth and its tax gatherer, the bushranger. With all that, the spread of a bucolic population; squatters, farmers, sheep, cattle, horses, wheat. The growth of a few big cities; a dwindling stock of aboriginals; a strange survival of stone age man, not yet anthropologically classified. It may yet appear that they are not a primitive people, but the degraded remnants of a once white race.

A few books have covered the first half of the century: Marcus Clark's "Term of His Natural Life," Price Warung's "Tales of the Convict System," the terrible convict autobiography "Ralph Rashleigh," recently published by Cape. The official records of the convict system remain yet to be exploited, but they are full of good stuff.

A few short story writers have scratched over the 'fifties and the diggings, but nothing of note has been done with them. The bushranging era produced one fairly good novel, "Robbery under Arms," by Rolf Bolderwood. The Horse got into print by the Swinburnian despairs of Adam Lindsay Gordon, who committed suicide, and by Banjo Paterson, who wrote bush ballads which will one day, perhaps, have the charm of medievalism. In about two hundred years, say. . . .

But bucolic Australia gave material to at least one prose writer who must be taken seriously; Henry Lawson.

The mass of Lawson's work was made inevitable by the conditions under which it was produced. Much of it was scribbled in out back pubs, in boarding-houses, between stray jobs to earn a living, which his writing never gave him. It was published in weekly papers and wretchedly paid for. Later it was collected into book form and has circulated widely in Australia. Australian national consciousness, such as it is, has been created by Lawson, which also marks its limitations. Lawson's work covered only a few types; bushmen and bushwomen, farmers and boundary riders, shearers and swagmen. If it has a tradition, that is based on Dickens and Bret Harte. Where Lawson intruded a conception of life it was crudely sentimental; where he wrote by his eye, he achieved literature. A careful selection of his best short stories would make a volume as unique as the peasant stories of de Maupassant.

Another prose writer to be mentioned with respect is Louis Stone, the author of "Jonah" and "Betty Wayside." "Jonah" is a powerful work; its material the slums, the city streets, the larrikin pushes, and its dramatization the capacity and rapacity of Jonah's struggle from the back streets to the control of a big business. Jonah is a hunchbacked leader of the push, and is a potent creation. "Betty Wayside" is a story of the suburbs.

Lawson is a direct product of the masses, but Stone is a sophisticated artist, who understands the *métier* of the novel. His characters are built in the round, visualized life size; the creatures of an idiosyncratic perversity—dramatized by a conflict of personality. He stopped writing suddenly some years ago; a submission to Australia or a rejection of it; I don't know which. It is hard to define the peculiar psychology of self-revenge by which the artist revenges himself on the stupidity of his generation. There can be no question at least over one aspect of this problem; the artist who does *not* function in his country destroys it.

Then there are Australia's women novelists, Katherine Pritchard, Gertrude Eldershaw, whose work has the weighted sincerity of a slowly built up crescendo based on a careful analysis of social conditions which seems to be the peculiar outlook of feminine prose today.

As for poetry!

Exasperation confounds me when I try to put a valuation on the real poetry that has been written in Australia, and which Australia has never read. I speak of the two poets who have lived and worked in Australia, Hugh McCrae and Kenneth Slessor. Expatriate artists belong to the alien national ego with which they have chosen to bring their own in conflict.

I have no space for an analysis of these two poets and it would not be worth reading, anyway. Prose analysis of poetry can only state a prose value. And I have never yet found that the image of form either in sound, form, or words can be forensically defined. All I can do is make a purely valueless personal statement. To me, McCrae is the greatest lyric utterance in direct succession to Burns, and Slessor has done more than any other modern poet with the difficult color plus form image and the variation of emotional rhythm released by the Sitwells and T. S. Elliot and others.

An annoying statement, and I apologize for making it, but I believe it will one day be accepted. I can only adduce as its present value that Australia does not know anything about these two poets. If it did, they would be instantly attacked by Australia.

That about sums up anything I could say about the special complex of that country. The process by which the inertia of the mob attacks the energy of the individual is so well understood today that one can only gape helplessly at the innocence with which it is practised. But today I begin to doubt Australian innocence; it is too conscious of its slogan "We respect nothing."

I put aside its imbecile censorship on books and motion pictures and art generally. This is not a sentient process, since any creature who is publicly labelled a censor must be a thing below the norm of a conscious analysis of its repressed motives. Politically, that sort of thing is inevitable in a country like Australia, which is no more than a community struggling frantically to support a bureaucracy so insanely out of proportion to its mass that no one would believe me if I stated the process in figures. It is a situation that surpasses farce and arrives at pure lunacy.

Well, let the politician enjoy his little day of sadistic power. But why should the Australian press be so fanatically intent on demonstrating a system that has crashed so many newspapers in Australia of late. Nemesis is purely a physical law in the reaction of inertia. Its effect in Australia is the system by which the press has always attacked and depreciated any Australian effort worthy of respect.

Melba once said to me, "Oh, the horrible people of this country! Everywhere else in the world I am respected; here I am insulted." Even in death they insulted her; the Sydney flags were not half masted when she died. When George Lambert, the painter, died the papers dismissed him in a few paragraphs and printed nasty little jokes about him.

I take only these two instances of a normal procedure which would be too depressing to go on itemizing. Everywhere else in the world death equalizes the hatred of the mob for the individual; in Australia it does not. The really disastrous effect of this stupidity between press and politician is that disgust and despair is destroying or alienating the young impulse to create. Bright young Australians have been leaving Australia for years.

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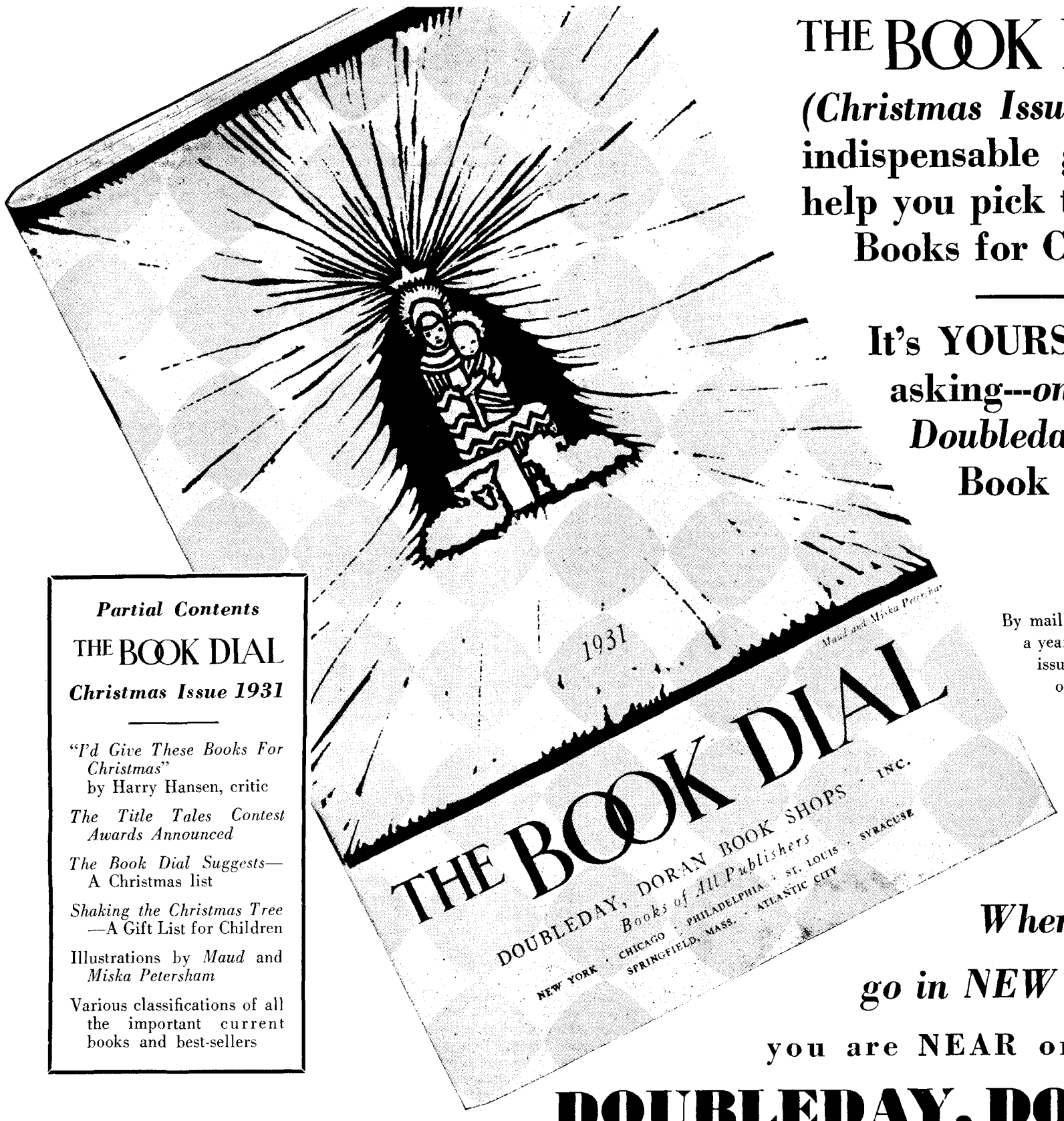
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Points of View

Stephen Crane Letters

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

I have discovered a large packet of Stephen Crane's unpublished writings including his notes for "Maggie, a Girl of the Streets," "The Red Badge of Courage," poems, stories, sketches, dialogues, and outlines for novels. Original versions of his most famous stories are also contained in the lot. I should like to communicate with those who have in their possession any unpublished writings, including letters. As Literary Manager of Crane's estate I remind the collector and publisher that the right to print for private distribution, or to publish for sale, any Stephen Crane material is retained by the estate as provided by law.

HARVEY TAYLOR.
59 West 46th Street, New York City.

An Author Replies

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

If you will kindly allow me the courtesy of your columns I should like to comment on your critic's review of "Four Handsome Negresses" which appeared in the *Saturday Review of Literature* of August 8th. I fear this reply is belated but I have been abroad and only saw the review recently.

I have nothing to say concerning your critic's opinion of my style; that is entirely a personal matter, and Mr. Macdougall is just as likely to be right, or wrong, as any other critic. But what I should like to ask is, if Mr. Robert Macdougall has ever lived among primitive Africans, or has he built up his idea of black people on the inhabitants of Harlem? When he scoffs at the idea of the noble savage—his expression, not mine—it seems to me that he is sadly old-fashioned and behind the times. For there is throughout Africa an increasing conviction amongst white people who know the primitives—and notably so outside the missionary groups—that perhaps after all Rousseau was not so far wrong; was less of a sentimentalist than the glorious Machine Age (not so glorious in the last eighteen months of surprising failure) would have us believe. I admit I have never read Rousseau on the noble savage any more than have half the critics who quote him with such fine effect. But I do know the savage, which is more to the point at the moment; and I do know the white man who exploits him as vigorously today as in the days when the Portuguese first rounded the Cape.

I know the African so well that in my book "Four Handsome Negresses" I took the utmost care that the picture of savage life should not be one-sided or idealized. I did not forget that constant scourge of Africa, the witch-doctor, nor the dreadful tortures inflicted by one black man on another at the witch-doctor's command. I did not forget the appalling power of superstition which is the greatest obstacle today in the progress of the primitive African towards civilization. I did not forget the unspeakable sorrows of the old and helpless. I did not forget the savagely indecent customs connected with sex which still blight primitive African society. All these dark patches are in the prologue of my book. Yet your critic, if he read so far, deliberately omits to mention them, and wishes his readers to understand that I have painted the savage state as an ideal state.

The truth is I dwell, not on the perfections of savage life, but on the comfort, to a wild soul, of Habit. However dreadful that Habit may be, it is precious to the savage. I challenge any critic to deny that this is my point of view plainly set out in the book for any intelligent reader.

Anyone who knows the distressing and pitiful homesickness of primitive Africans when removed even thirty miles from their tribe would bear out what I say. Missionaries in the past have reported cases of death from sheer nostalgia, which they had observed in the slave gangs. About three years ago I myself was told by a missionary that a boy, i. e. a grown man of twenty-five, whom he was taking with him as a servant from one part of Africa to another, committed suicide rather than land in a strange harbor. This man let himself down the ship's side by a rope, deliberately descending until the water covered his head. Then he held on to the rope until he died by drowning.

As for Mr. Macdougall's curious accusation that I "display the spirit of Peeping Tom," he seems to be the first critic to discover it. A not very enviable distinction. May I very delicately remind him that "Honi soit . . .?" There was a woman critic in England who said the book was lascivious, she herself being a successful writer of popular homosexuality. To her too I should like to whisper "Honi soit. . . . ?"

Well, well; every author has to make the best of a bad job when his books are reviewed by folk who, to misquote Shakespeare, see "bad in everything."

HERNEKIN BAPTIST.

Madame Blavatsky

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

In a recent letter the editors of the Aryan Path, a journal "devoted to the consideration of the great ideas found in the principal literatures, philosophies, and religions of the world; of all activities . . . working for human betterment; of all movements which spiritually advance the thought of the race," condescended to neglect these aims for a moment in order to criticize my modest little review of C. E. Bechofer-Roberts's "The Mysterious Madame: Helena Petrovna Blavatsky." The weightiness of the magazine may justify a somewhat longer answer than the case would otherwise merit.

The charges against Mr. Bechofer-Roberts and myself are five in number and will be taken up seriatim.

(1) "The Mysterious Madame" merely repeats the story published in the New York *Sun* (on July 20, 1890), for which that paper was sued for libel and was driven to public apology; Mr. Bechofer-Roberts "brings up the same old charges, without any reference to the above recorded facts."

In reality, the libel suit, which was brought in Madame Blavatsky's name and his own by the American theosophist, William Quann Judge (who was later charged with fraud and trickery by Mrs. Annie Besant herself), was restricted to certain items in the *Sun* story, and the paper tried in vain to get the court's permission to introduce evidence substantiating the bulk of its story. The main item, reported on the hearsay testimony of the great American ornithologist, Elliott Coues, was that Madame Blavatsky had born a son to a certain Prince Emil Wittgenstein. Mr. Bechofer-Roberts, on the other hand, regards this child, who certainly existed, as the fruit of Madame Blavatsky's liaison with Baron Nicholas Meyendorff, a Russian (his information being derived directly from the Baron's sister), or as the result of a previous liaison with a Hungarian opera singer named Mitrovich (testified to by Madame Blavatsky's cousin, the statesman Sergius Witte in his "Memoirs"). The story is radically different from that told in the *Sun,* and the evidence is very much stronger. Equally incorrect is the statement of the editors of the *Aryan Path* that there is no reference in "The Mysterious Madame" to the *Sun* trial; the reader will find a paragraph devoted to it on pages 283-284.

(2) The reviewer was in error in stating that the two volumes of "Isis Unveiled" fell dead from the press on their appearance in 1877; to the contrary, a facsimile edition has recently been brought out by Madame Blavatsky's loyal students.

How the publication of a contemporary edition proves that the original one was favorably received fifty years ago I am too dull to make out. On its first appearance, "Isis Unveiled" was greeted by the *Springfield Republican* as "a large dish of hash," by the New York *Sun* as "discarded rubbish," by the New York *Tribune* as "crude and undigested"; the New York *Times* took no notice of it; Henry Steel Olcott, later president of the Theosophical Society, who had charge of its publication, confessed in his "Old Diary Leaves" (p. 217) that the publisher lost so much money on it that he refused to bring out a third volume of the work, although the manuscript was already prepared, and that Madame Blavatsky later destroyed this manuscript in despair of finding a publisher for it.

(3) The reviewer's charge of plagiarism was unjust, since Madame Blavatsky explicitly disclaimed any novelty of ideas.

My critics are apparently unaware of the meaning of the word "plagiarism." It consists in the unacknowledged use, not of the idea, but of the direct words of another (in "Isis Unveiled" extending to whole pages). This is commonly considered an immoral practice, but I said nothing about that. I merely said that "Isis Unveiled" is a "mélange of plagiarisms," and it is.

(4) In his biography of Madame Blavatsky, Mr. Bechofer-Roberts failed to discuss the teachings of Theosophy—"the truths uttered by the great seers, sages, poets, writers existing in every nation from modern times extending back into the prehistoric past."

Mr. Bechofer-Roberts was not writing a universal encyclopedia. He does, however—what is more to the point—summarize the ideas of Madame Blavatsky's two major works, "Isis Unveiled" and "The Secret Doctrine." In so far as their teachings merely reproduce elements from ancient Hindu philosophy they have many admirable characteristics, but Madame Blavatsky's particular contribution was her wholly unauthentic claim to have received them by miraculous revelation from certain mythical Mahatmas dwelling in the Himalayas.

(5) "The History of the Theosophical Movement" should be consulted for the real facts concerning Madame Blavatsky.

This anonymous work, published in 1925, was obviously a product of the Tingley group of California theosophists, violently hostile to Olcott and Mrs. Besant. Its authors are not merely partisan but super-partisan. Nevertheless, it is an amusing production and will give the reader an excellent idea of the continual squabbles in the theosophical ranks. For the real facts concerning Madame Blavatsky, however, I would suggest that the reader, if he wishes to go behind Mr. Bechofer-Roberts, consult the following primary, not secondary, sources:

Proceedings of the British Psychical Research, vol. III (1885), containing Richards Hodgson's elaborate report on Madame Blavatsky's activities in India.

Mme. E. Coulomb, "Some Account of My Intercourse with Mme. Blavatsky from 1872 to 1884" (1885).

Franz Hartmann, "Observations during a Nine Months' Stay at the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society" (1884).

V. S. Solovyoff, "A Modern Priestess of Isis" (1895).

H. S. Olcott, "Old Diary Leaves" (1895).

A. P. Sinnett, "The Early Days of Theosophy in Europe" (1922).

"Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett" (1923).

ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES.
Spuyten Duyvil, N. Y. C.

Epistle to H. S. C.

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

I enclose an epistle to the author of "Classic Americans," inspired by the review of his book in *The Saturday Review.*

Hush, shut the sanctum door! turn the great key!
Plug up the keyhole with a sonnet! We,
Like foxes run to earth,must pant and quail,
Aud curse the Fates who sent us both to Yale!
In whose relaxing atmosphere our hearts
Untimely softened, like to lemon tarts
Left on the baker's counter over night:
Our crusts are limp and soggy—none who bite
Into us now but nauseate the taste
Of sodden pastry, deliquescent paste!
Critics from Harvard, Princeton, Oberlin
Have stronger fillings and a tougher skin.
Only at Yale is sentiment over-rated
And pusillaminous trimming inculcated.
So says Van Doren (Carl), and Carl must know;
He writes so pompously, it must be so.
Meanwhile, locked in here safely from the thunder
Of Carl's damp squib (a scarce nine seconds' wonder),
Smile, smoke your pipe, and leave your reputation
(Not to *The Nation,* no) but to the nation:
You'll find it's growing nicely, sound and hale,
In spite of Carl and captiousness—and Yale.

X.

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The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received.

Belles Lettres

CREATIVE CRITICISM AND OTHER ESSAYS. By J. E. SPINGARN. New and Enlarged Edition. Harcourt, Brace. 1931. $2.

This is a reprinting of Mr. Spingarn's essay on the new criticism which at the time of its publication in this country introduced American writers to the critical ideas of Croce as modified and applied by the author. With it are included other essays written by Mr. Spingarn on dramatic criticism, the American critic, the American scholar, the new Humanism, and other topics.

Biography

THE KING OF THE BEGGARS. BAMPFYLDE-MOORE CAREW. Edited by C. H. WILLIAMSON. Oxford University Press. 1931. $6.

This is a reprint of "The Life and Adventures of"—1745, and "The Apology for the Life of"—1749, with introduction, notes, and appendices. Carew died in 1759 after a number of years of more regular and reputable life. Both books were put together from his accounts of his adventures. The "Apology" abounds in moralizings that are probably not Carew's, but it contains his travels in America, which have interest. The "Life and Adventures" stops short with his going aboard the ship.

Fiction

PHANTOM FINGERS. By J. JEFFERSON FARJEON. Dial. 1931. $2.

This book belongs to the category of shockers or thrillers rather than to that of the detective story proper; that is, it is not a novelized enigma, but a novelized melodrama. It is, indeed, a sort of sequel to the author's excellent stage melodrama, "Number 17," since it carries on the career of the little Cockney tramp, Ben, who rose to necessity and rounded up the crooks in that play. In this book he is again found at the beginning a destitute but cheery outcast, is again involved by chance in the affairs of important criminals, and again comes out on top. The story is a good example of its class, exciting but not too implausible, but Ben is better suited to the stage than to the page. His comic cowardice and sudden accesses of courage, are better material for an actor than for a reader's unaided imagination, and his excessively Cockney dialect, which can be amusing and agreeable to the ear, is likely to prove an irritation to the eye. But "Phantom Fingers" is better than the run of thrillers, and may be recommended to the addicts of this kind of book.

THE COMPELLED HERO. By RICHARD HERON WARD. Cape & Smith. 1931. $2.50.

One generality concerning the intelligentsia, like all generalities, both true and false, is dear to the man in the street. It is that those in any way artistically inclined—and more especially expatriates—must needs "express" themselves in a wild Bohemian existence. "The Compelled Hero" has to do with just such a group in Paris. The book reveals their disease of "damn-cleverness" (a cliché, by the way, of the author's which occurs *ad nauseam*). Mr. Ward exposes unmercifully his young pseudo-intellectuals as posers all, "secretly becoming bitterly ashamed," hating "many of the messy stupid things we did," but continuing them "because they were part of the Bohemian's stock-in-trade." All pretenders, save the beautiful heroine of the golden voice, who, aloof and chaste, is yet a friendly tolerant member of the clique. She, too, is finally sucked in—by the young English composer, Willy Caverne, her first lover. Her weakness lies in giving herself to the next man who needs her till she is destined to become "one of life's prostitutes."

In the introspective mood induced by the use of first person singular, Willy psycho-analyzes his companions and himself from cover to cover. A more utterly self-conscious lot of young people it would be difficult to find anywhere in fiction. Nor are their nationalities ever convincing to the reader. They are superficial types, like Justin, the exotic, much sought after painter, perpetually, noisily drunk; and Janus, moody Irish youth of eighteen, dominated by Conniss, cynical English author of sordid books; and the sensation-seeking American girl, Ellen Hawks.

The outspokeness with regard to physical details, and the crude references to sex, are reminiscent of Hemingway's "A Farewell to Arms." But they are here without the excuse of war. And yet the force of the writer's criticism directed towards his crowd of wasters, vicious in their sheer futility, and pathetic in their mistaken values, redeems it in comparison with the flood of post-war books of the same order. Despite its somewhat worn and disillusioned philosophy, no sentimentality spoils the integrity of the whole. In this his first novel, Mr. Ward takes the world about which he is writing too seriously altogether. No amount of statement in the text to the contrary alters that fact.

THE CABIN IN THE COTTON. By HARRY HARRISON KROLL. Long & Smith. 1931. $2.

Human greed has undoubtedly played its part in the tragedy of the cotton farmer, but the attempt of Harry Harrison Kroll in his first novel, "The Cabin in the Cotton," to reduce the tragedy of landlord and tenant in the cotton country to an impasse between top thieves and bottom thieves is convincing neither as fiction nor economics. Even less convincing is Mr. Kroll's dénouement when robber tenant and robber landlord are shown like sinners at a Methodist revival, the way to a salvation based on the dictum that honesty is the best policy.

This reviewer pretends to be no cotton farmer nor any farm expert but anyone reared in the continually tragic cotton growing sections of the South knows that the troubles which have attended the decades of low prices, relieved only by the World War, have not grown from the simple greed of thieves. Tenants have stolen and landlords have cheated but the tragedy lies in the diverse, far from local, factors touching the crop itself. Thoughtful men in the South have studied these problems for decades. They have advised diversification. They have urged coöperation. Both have been widely tried. Both have been helpful. Neither has been able to solve the bitter problems of the cotton-growing man. The villain of this Southern tragedy is neither landlord nor tenant. Cotton is King, but Southerners also know that Cotton is a Devil.

From a literary standpoint Mr. Kroll's book suffers from those defects which commonly attend the discussion of an ecomonic question under the guise of fiction. From sympathy with the poor whites he draws his planter class and particularly the nymphomaniac daughter of the planter in terms of gross caricature. On the other side of the struggle, his poor whites, even though sentimentalized, are figures of far greater reality. In the handling of these characters and in the descriptions of the plantation Mr. Kroll shows abilities worthy of a better book.

Miscellaneous

CLASSICAL STUDIES IN HONOR OF JOHN C. ROLFE. Edited by *George Depue Hadzsits*. University of Pennsylvania Press. $3.

HOLYWOOD UNDRESSED. By *Sylvia*. Brentanos. $2.

THE BANKS AND PROSPERITY. By *Lionel D. Edie*. Harpers. $2.50.

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Out of Norway

Reviews by ANNA C. REQUE
American-Scandinavian Foundation

EKORN. By HAAKON LIE. Illustrations by KURT WIESE. A translation from the Norwegian by CLAES LEONARD HULTGREN. Chicago: Laidlaw Brothers. 1931. $2.

IN "Ekorn" Haakon Lie does for the squirrels, in shorter form, what Felix Salten's "Bambi" did for the life of the wild deer. We are introduced to Ekorn, our red squirrel, as a tiny, blind baby, and we watch and follow his exciting adventures until he reaches maturity. Then we leave him safely sheltered in the friendly forest, and we are spared the inevitable tragic end which comes to all wild life. Besides him and his family we meet a great many other beasts and birds that live in the woods and incidentally learn much of their ways and habits.

The prelude to the story, a description of the forest clothing the mountain, through all the changing seasons is beautifully written, as is the book as a whole. The author, a Norwegian government inspector of forests, knows his subject intimately, and he has to his credit not only books on birds and insects, botany and forestry, but also volumes of poetry and essays.

Kurt Wiese's illustrations are attractive and suit the text admirably.

KARI. A Story of Kari Supper from Lindeland, Norway. By GABRIEL SCOTT. Translated by ANVOR BARSTAD. Illustrated by EDGAR PARIN D'AULAIRE. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company. 1931. $2.

CHILDREN and grownups, too, will like Kari, the little daughter of a country doctor in Norway, and they will enjoy the picture of home life the story presents. Kari, the youngest of her family, is thrown on her own resources for playmates and amusements. Since she has a great capacity both for friendship and make-believe this is no hardship, and she has a lovely time in all sorts of unexpected ways. There is Bertha, the old apple tree, who gives her lovely rides, and the brook along which she plays and gathers treasure trove; and there are Per Mail and Isak-with-the-Load, and other travellers who can be greeted from the field gate as they pass by on the road. What with fishing salmon with her father, and helping mother make cakes, and having lessons with Aunt Inga, she is busy from morning till night.

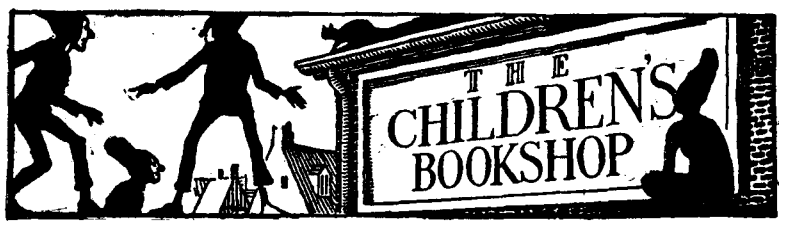
When she grows older she goes off to school in town and a new world full of girl friends of her own age opens up. After one happy year she is given the choice of going on or remaining at home. She unhesitatingly decides to give up school and help her mother. And there we leave her very happy among the pots and pans and mops and brooms.

Gabriel Scott, who writes both novels and children's books, is widely read in Norway, but only one other of his books, "The Golden Gospel," has heretofore been translated into English. Anvor Barstad's translation preserves the spirit of the original text, and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire's drawings are delightful.

THE GOAT WHO WOULDN'T BE GOOD. A Story of Norway. By ZHENYA and JAN GAY. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1931. $1.75.

HERE is a lively tale for the very young of life on the farm in Norway. It is full of picturesque descriptions of native manners and customs. We are told of the annual journey to the mountain farm where the cows and goats and sheep are brought to graze during the summer. We read of life at the sæter, and haymaking, and dairying, and sports and pastimes. A wedding with its attendant preparations and gay festivities ends the story.

Children will find it easy reading and will enjoy the excellent illustrations. A more critical reader might pick flaws with a minor slip or two due to a rather superficial knowledge of the country.



Conducted by KATHERINE ULRICH

St. Hans' day is not the middle of June, but our St. John's day, June 24th, and this is not the day universally chosen for the trek to the mountains. The exodus takes place long before unless the season is very late. A sæter is not a hut or a cabin, but the mountain farm or pasture.

THE COMING OF THE DRAGON SHIPS. By FLORENCE MCCLURG EVERSON and HOWARD EVERSON. Illustrated by Edgar Parin d'Aulaire. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1931. $2.

THIS book might well have been called Gudrid the Fair, for she is the central figure in this story of Iceland, Greenland, and Vineland in the Viking Age. We meet her first as a young girl, busy with her pet animals and assisting her grandmother with the spinning and churning and the many tasks of a well-ordered house and farm of nine hundred years ago. It somehow does not seem as remote as that for the story is told in a simple, natural manner, and the life described seems more full of familiar experiences and kindly everyday touches than are some stories of the Vikings.

Her brother Sigurd takes her with him on a trading voyage in his dragon ship, and they meet other ships and travellers, among them Leif Ericsson, their father's old friend, come from Greenland. Later Gudrid and her family and a company of their neighbors move to Greenland. Leif Ericsson's discovery of America also enters the story, and the settlement in Vineland by Thorfinn Karlsefne, who has married Gudrid. We also learn why they sailed away from America and back to Iceland.

The illustrations in color and black and white by Edgar Parin d'Aulaire, are sure to find favor among the young readers.

Blue Skies and Fig Trees

THE TRUCE OF THE WOLF, and Other Stories of Old Italy. By MARY GOULD DAVIS. Illustrated by JAN VAN EVEREN. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1931. $2.50.

Reviewed by MARGERY BIANCO

Of all the Italian story books I have read I can remember none which gives so definitely the color and feeling of the Italian countryside as this group of tales by Mary Gould Davis. Miss Davis knows Italy, the particular part of Italy which she describes, very intimately; she knows the country people and the way they move and speak, she knows the look of the houses and the trees and the hills and the color of the sunshine, and all this she has managed, with the skill of the born story-teller, to weave into her tales. For though the stories she has chosen are many of them legendary, old folktales that have survived many generations, one feels that the characters have in many instances been drawn from living types of today. Elisabetta and Pietro and Maria are all real people; one might meet them, as Miss Davis herself has met them, in almost any little hillside village. Even Nanni, the little donkey, with "a coat as brown as a ripe chestnut and a white star on his forehead," and the wise look in his eyes, is essentially an Italian donkey. One seems to know the steep, stony roads that he travelled, and the little cool brook where he always stopped to drink.

The story of the Wolf of Gubbio, from the Fioretti of St. Francis, is simply and very beautifully retold. The three fairy tales included, though already known, will be new to a great many readers. They somehow interest one less than the more characteristic folktales. Calandrino and the Pig, retold from Boccaccio, the story of Nanni, and the tale of the Signora Lupa have the real color of their setting, enhanced by many delightful and authentic touches. They have a perfect rhythm for telling or reading aloud; the Signora Lupa especially, heard as Miss Davis herself tells it, is something to be long remembered, but it still holds all of its dramatic quality in print. There is a zest and humor to it which are irresistible, and it remains in one's mind as the masterpiece of the book.

The volume has been excellently produced as regards typography and decoration, but while Jan van Everen's work shows a fine sense of design and his incidental decorations are delightful, the full-page illustrations, archaic in feeling, suggest a gothic rather than Italian influence, and are in rather strong contrast to the lifelike quality and action of the stories themselves.

And from Hungary

PETER. By JULISKA DARU AND CHARLOTTE LEDERER. Illustrated by CHARLOTTE LEDERER. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1931. $2.50.

THE GOLDEN FLOCK. By CHARLOTTE LEDERER. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1931. $1.50.

Reviewed by LOIS LENSKI

"PETER" is a long adventure story for boys and girls from eight to fourteen. From the very first chapter with its angry bull racing and plunging down the highroad, to the last, with its extraordinary climax of a king's life saved by a small boy, it is full of excitement. The setting is the village of Mikofalva in Hungary, and the chief characters are a group of peasant boys who live there, with Peter Fejes, the leader of the group.

The villain of the story is a most unpleasant and unprincelike little boy of Peter's age, Marczi, a distant cousin of the reigning house, whom the king's enemies hope to place on the throne. It would be difficult to imagine a more cruel, rude, or mean boy. No matter what his claims to the throne might be, one feels sure from the very beginning, when he deliberately puts the burning tinder into the bull's ear, that he cannot possibly ever become king. Perhaps his evil ways stand out the more conspicuously by reason of comparison with Peter and his friends who have no blemishes on their characters whatever. Their virtues are so overpowering, their courage and heroism are so great under the direst stress, that one gets the feeling that they are not quite human, and the story has an air of improbability and unreality.

The general tone is, however, not fantastic or imaginative, but everyday, workaday, real, life, giving, aside from its exaggerations of plot, an accurate picture of life in a peasant village in Hungary. The busy life of Peter's family, which includes his parents and grandparents and little twin sisters, is vividly portrayed, as well as the lives of their neighbors and the general activity of the village. There is a confusion of characters, but the more important ones, for example Peter's grandfather, are well drawn and true to life. Colorful events of village life, such as the harvest festival and the wedding, might have been given more importance. We get a clear picture of the mountainous surroundings of Mikofalva, with their rugged hills, cliffs, waterfalls, and caves.

Charlotte Lederer's illustrations are inadequate both as interpretations of the story and as an artistic expression. It would seem that as an artist she is more at home in drawing for younger children, and that she succeeds best when allowed plenty of color.

Every book about Hungary needs color and plenty of it. We see this clearly in "The Golden Flock," for which Charlotte Lederer has done both text and illustrations. Printed in flat tones of gay cerise, green, blue, and yellow, the book is most attractive. It is a picture book for children from four to eight years, and has a charming accompanying story. The right-hand pages contain full-page drawings, in Mrs. Lederer's best manner, full of gaiety of design and color, and very Hungarian in spirit. Work like this, one feels, is no casual American imitation of a peasant art, but a genuine national expression.

Mari néni and Pista bácsi, Aunty Mari and Uncle Pista, were a devoted couple who lived in a country village in a tiny whitewashed house. The story tells of their desire for a child, and their wish to take one of the queen's children to be their own, when they heard that she had been left a widow. One of the loveliest drawings in the book is that of the queen surrounded by her beautiful children. Uncle Pista goes on a search for a golden flock of lambs, which alone would be worthy for a royal child to tend. His journey lasts many years, during which time the royal children have all grown up, but he returns to find his wife happy with a tiny foundling babe, which she had discovered in the upper pastures.

It is a simple story beautifully told and beautifully presented.

Pungent French Flavor

LAUGHING LAD. By HELEN COALE CREW. New York: The Century Company. 1931. $1.75.

Reviewed by SALLY FISHER

THIS is a story that parents will like to read aloud to their children. Do not misunderstand me. The children will like it too.If they are left to read it to themselves, they may skip some of the pleasant descriptions of French villages and country life, of Marseilles of the Pyrenees, even of Paris streets, and they may pass quickly over some mildly informative passages about Victor Hugo and Daudet. But they will skip not a word of Jean's adventures with the sinister gypsies who carry him off, nor of his gallant conquering of all the obstacles that stood between him and his home in Tarascon.

And once in the main current of the story, they will be carried away by what happens during the terrible years of the war to Jean, the always-gay, who from being a taxi-driver in Paris, becomes a soldier at Verdun, is wounded and crippled, but at the end is studying to be a doctor, quite happily. What happens to his family is as interesting to the young reader, his family so touching and attractive and so French, from the self-respecting barber father to the hard-working, loving mother selflessly devoted to her Jean, to his sober-faced, pathetic, cripple brother, and their pretty sister. The French flavor is as authentic as it is pungent and children will not fail to get the flavor of such a passage as this between Jean, faint with hunger as he tries to work his way home from the gypsies, and the mighty-muscled inn-keeper's wife for whom he was working.

> "Child, you are not eating."
> "No Madam."
> "You are not hungry?"
> "I think I can hold out till I am paid for my work."
> "Tut, tut! One cannot trifle with one's stomach. One must pay it due respect. Come with me."

Yes, it is a story that contains not only new friends for the children but worthwhile friends; that will be liked not only by reading-aloud aunts and parents, but by children hunched over the book in corners, too absorbed in the fortunes of the Manine family to hear the dinner-bell.

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The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the choice of books should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*. As for reasons of space ninety percent of the inquiries received cannot be answered in print, a stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed for reply.

L. S. F., Lowell, Mass., asks for further suggestions for a drama reading circle whose program already includes "The Apple Cart," "Death Takes a Holiday," "Elizabeth the Queen," and "The Barretts of Wimpole Street."

UP to the present theatrical season the career of Eugene O'Neill might have been described as a cumulative success produced by consecutive failures—even "Strange Interlude" being more interesting as an experiment than valuable as an achievement. But there is no uncertainty about "Mourning Becomes Electra." It is printed (Liveright), but I do not know how it would impress anyone meeting it thus for the first time; I saw it acted first, and for me the stage production will always color the printed words. Now I know how the Athenians could cling to those stone seats through a long day's sun, furiously intent upon a series of three plays, all of whose actual events they knew beforehand; you may know precisely what must happen not only to *anax andron* Ezra but to every other member of the cast, and does that slacken the strain? It does not.

John Galsworthy's "The Roof" (Scribner) comes out in print as the stage production here gets under way, and makes not only excellent reading but an incentive to discussion such as justifies the existence of a drama circle. There would be discussion over Thornton Wilder's new volume of one-act plays, "The Long Christmas Dinner" (Coward-McCann); that much I do know, and that is all of which I feel sure about the title play, except that it has greater staying-power than those in his earlier volume—they took three minutes and this takes ninety years. I think I never read a serious play that was so funny. Two stage successes of the season have just been added to the publications of Samuel French; "After To-morrow," by Hugh Stange and John Golden, and "The Left Bank," Elmer Rice's picture of American expatriate life in Paris; both of these stimulate discussion on not-too-strenuous subjects. "The First Mrs. Fraser," St. John Ervine's own novelization of his play, has just been published by Macmillan—an unusually successful performance of this feat of transformation.

H. G., Newark, N. J., asks for advice on cataloguing a small personal library. There are books enough on cataloguing, published by the American Library Association and no doubt by houses specializing in library helps, but all those that I have seen are of little use to the owner of a reasonable, large, personally selected outfit of books. The Dewey system, priceless to the public library, covers the individual collection, to be sure, but covers it as a rug might cover a postage-stamp; most home libraries follow the owner's tastes and inclinations, and these are seldom scattering enough to give him a range of subjects wide as that by which the small branch library serves its community. The best advice on listing books in a home collection is also the shortest; it is to be found on little more than a page of one of the most practical manuals such a collector can keep on hand, "The Care and Repair of Books," by Harry M. Lydenburg and John Archer of the New York Public Library, just published by Bowker. It gives detailed directions for repair and mending of every kind, with photographs of tools necessary, as well as suggestions on keeping books and manuscripts in good condition. The typography is a joy.

M. E. S., Washington, D. C., asks for the more informative books of Shakespearean criticism or biography that have appeared in the past year or so. Within the year the massive and authoritative "William Shakespeare," by Sir Edward Kerchever Chambers, has appeared (Oxford University Press), a study of facts and problems in two large volumes; this is a work of reference of high importance. Another tremendous work of a different type has been published by the same press, the "Shakespeare Bibliography" of Professors Ebisch and Shucking of the University of Leipzig; this classifies, out of the huge mass of Shakespearean studies, such as still live and influence students, and there are enough of these to fill 312 pages. M. W. Latham's "Elizabethan Fairies" (Columbia University Press) fascinates anyone who cares for folklore or Elizabethan drama; one sees what the little people were in the popular imagination of the sixteenth century, and what Shakespeare's fairies were to later literature. The everlasting vitality of these comedies and tragedies is once more demonstrated by the interest an intelligent reader takes in "Shakespeare's Problem Comedies," by W. W. Lawrence (Macmillan) — studies of "All's Well," "Measure for Measure." "Troilus and Cressida," and parts of "Cymbeline" and Winter's Tale," considered with relation to their medieval background—and "Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes," by L. B. Campbell (Macmillan), a Cambridge University Press study of Hamlet, Othello, Lear, and Macbeth, considered as expressions of Shakespeare's philosophy of human nature. H. W. Farnam's "Shakespeare's Economics" (Yale University Press) examines passages showing the economic background and ideals of the time. Arthur Acheson's "Shakespeare, Chapman, Sir Thomas More" (Brick Row Book Shop), will excite sharp discussion on matters of authorship and interest students of the theatre. To round out a list that may have lengthened—so well the supply keeps up—by the time this gets into print, there is Dr. Leslie Hotson's "Shakespeare vs. Shallow" (Little, Brown) which has had more newspaper comment on either side of the ocean than any of the other books, for it is the latest of the series of spectacular discoveries rewarding the beaver-like industry and treasure-seeker's intuition of this American scholar.

C. S., New York, is thinking of opening a used-book shop and asks for books that might be informing. The hero of one of the novels of the year for which I am uncommonly grateful, "Albert Grope," by F. O. Mann (Harcourt, Brace) worked in a used-book shop in London, boy and man, and made not only a living but a fortune at it—though I admit he made most of the fortune out of his sideline, display advertising of a challenging nature. This is a leisurely story, not so much in the Victorian manner as about a Victorian man, and though the bookshop is described in loving detail, I doubt that its methods would make money in America today. Better ask the National Association of Book Publishers, whose year-round bookselling headquarters are at 347 Fifth Avenue, N. Y.; this is the address to which I continually direct inquirers expecting to open bookshops.

A Discovery

in a first novel which is "a miniature of Victorian Ireland" and an English "book of the month." If you liked Daphne du Maurier's *The Loving Spirit*, you'll find here similar charm and power. Don't miss this deeply thrilling story of the Considines of Mellick, who were a family, a business, and a clan. . . .

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By Kate O'Brien

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Publishers, 386 Fourth Avenue, *New York*

Man-of-war of modern letters who "sailed the Spanish Main with the blackest of flags, the reddest of sashes, the hugest of cutlasses and the thinnest of skins"—FRANK HARRIS, *author of the long-awaited biography of* BERNARD SHAW

A year ago last June the writer of these lines was holidaying in Paris when a telegram from FRANCIS JOSEPH XAVIER SCULLY, *Variety's* roving European correspondent, announced that FRANK HARRIS was at last writing the long-projected biography of GEORGE BERNARD SHAW at his villa on the Riviera.

"Drop everything," said Scully, *"and fly to Nice at once.* SHAW *is coming through with letters and memorabilia never before published.* HARRIS *is the man of destiny for this biography. It will rank with his classics on* SHAKESPEARE *and* WILDE. *To meet* HARRIS *is to know a titan. This is the sort of editorial tip that comes once in a life-time."*.... In less than a split second the itinerant half of *The Inner Sanctum* Dropped Everything....

Ever since that message, *The Inner Sanctum* has been impatiently looking forward to November 27th, 1931 —the publication date of *Bernard Shaw* by FRANK HARRIS. *An Unauthorized Biography Based on First Hand Information, with a Postscript and Letters by Mr. Shaw.* After seventeen months of preparation, planning, writing, revising, editing, and research—together with the most exciting correspondence with both G. B. S. and F. H.—the great day is finally at hand. The tragedy is that although HARRIS finished the book he did not live to see its publication.

If ever there was a first-edition item of two-fold "association" value in modern letters, this is incontestably it. A Shaw-"first" is priceless. A Harris "first" is priceless. This is both. But chiefly it is something much more enduring, infinitely more exciting, than a mere collector's item. It is literature in its own right. Who touches this book touches *two* men.

Before his death at Nice last summer, FRANK HARRIS saw first galley proofs of his completed book. From that point, SHAW himself saw it through the press, adding a brilliant final estimate of HARRIS, a wealth of letters and other intimate first-hand material, and setting forth, in an extended and characteristic postscript, his own part in this unique work.

The price of *Bernard Shaw* by FRANK HARRIS is four dollars. Publication date is November 27th, this American edition being simultaneous with publication in England. Advance inquiries have been so persistent and so eager, that these details are set down here to aid those readers who would like to place reservations for the first printing with their own book-sellers.

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The PHŒNIX NEST

WE are now learning French. But we don't get on awfully fast because the person who has been teaching it to us is so attractive-looking that it makes us absent-minded. However, we are perfectly positive we can learn French eventually. It seems so much easier when one has a sympathetic instructress. . . .

The evening we encountered this phenomenon we had dropped in to see *Madeleine Boyd* and *Ernest Boyd* and *Mr. and Mrs. Henry Mencken*. Then "felt we like some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken!" And that little planet is bilingual! Henry and Ernest went right on roaring their German drinking songs while we skipped through the daisy meadows of Arcady playing on a flute—or we felt something like that, at least. As long as the little planet was talking to us we were perfectly happy and had vine leaves in our hair. Almost our great age fell from us in the presence of so much youth and beauty. And the next day when we vaguely roused at ten-thirty we wotted well we were paying for those vine leaves! Assailed were we with agenbite of inwit; sunk were we in stupor stupendous; racked were we by headache and asthma; come all the way home in the Subway, cast out from the courts of Olympus. . . .

H. L. MENCKEN.
FROM A PORTRAIT BY NIKLI SCHATTENSTEIN.

Ah well, ah well, we are not now the strength that in old days could wassail through *noctes ambrosianæ*, pick themselves up from under the table the next morning, and never so jocund greet the dawn. Someone is sure to rebuke us for mentioning the good old days when everybody got drunk, but the fact is that they actually did, and better literary men than most today tottered with toddies and lay slain of usquebaugh. . . .

We—as a matter of fact—were quite well-behaved the other night. Eloquent but dignified. And yet the next morning we felt as though a ten-ton truck had run over our skull. Natheless, the little planet sparkled in our memory most enchantingly with merry lustre! Which is why we can only tell you of *Henry Mencken* that he is a lovely man, but we can't remember a darn thing he said—except that he asked us down to Baltimore! . . .

Recently at lunch *Julia Peterkin* revealed the fact that she was fond of boxing, particularly of a certain flyweight champion named Izzy Schwartz. She sometimes goes to a boxing match with *Carl Sandburg*. Izzy Schwartz's name suggests to us that priceless passage in "The Diary of a Provincial Lady" where the children come in singing "Izz Izzy Azzy Wuzz." Mrs. Peterkin is a most charming *raconteuse* and she now nurses the unconquerable hope that someone will write a rich, full book around the life of *Theodosia Burr*. She says the material is superlative. . . .

On December ninth the P. E. N. Club is giving a dinner in honor of *Governor Wilbur L. Cross* of Connecticut who once taught us Chaucer in New Haven, and we want to say that he is a gentleman we highly delight to honor—being among other things one of the most considerable lights of Yale University. Most of all he has shown how scholar and statesman may beautifully combine. . . .

Mr. Benét, who runs the poet's corner tells us that *Mr. Morley* who mows the bowling green, had a letter from a *Mr. Leroy Rumsey* way out in California who said—gasp—that Mr. B. was in lamentable error when he spoke of a sonnet of *James Feibleman's* as having, technically, "almost every single fault a sonnet should not possess." The reason is that Mr. Rumsey claims to have created "the worst sonnet ever written." This bard's assertion is that his sonnet contains not merely *almost* every fault but absolutely every fault. The title of it is "To Chemical Residue Caused by Social Indiscretion." Mr. Rumsey will not allow us to see this masterpiece but he sent on to Mr. Morley his sonnet on "Death and Destruction," which we promptly swiped from Mr. Morley in order to print it here. He claims it is pretty successful as a bad sonnet and we agree with him:

And when the winter comes a-stealing in
I will not weep and ask the heavens why
It must be me and no one else to die.
Full gladly will I welcome the wintry din
Of rain and howling wind, and all its kin
Of storm and strife; and then, without a sigh,
Upon some tired, quiet hill I'll lie,
Peace in my soul, to welcome God within.

And I will throw away my ragged clothes,
The outward symbol of my inward life—
And snow will blanket me for my repose—
Snow clean, soft, pure—a garment that's not rife
With patches. Thus will I of my life dispose
After I've thrown away my ragged clothes.

We wish all luck to *Robert Keith Leavitt*, who for somewhat over a year wrote for the G. Lynn Sumner Company, advertising agents, a monthly letter called *Voyages & Discoveries*. He and the company have now come to an amiable parting of the ways, though he still recommends the firm highly; and he is issuing his "letter" "now and then," for his own delectation and that of his many friends, at present from Mystic, Connecticut. When we began to receive the "letter" from the G. Lynn Sumner Company we perceived in it a touch of genius. And we still think so. And no matter how many books there are already, we think Mr. Leavitt ought to write a book. . . .

We never expected to hear of a book by *Struthers Burt* being viewed askance by a publisher, yet it seems that his "Festival" was refused by one in England because it was feared that the English censor would consider it obscene. Closely on the heels of its publication over there, however, the English Book Society made it its November choice and ***Hugh Walpole*** has included "Festival" among the books he considers to be the "best of the year." Scribner's published it last February in this country and it was the choice for that month of the Book League of America. . . .

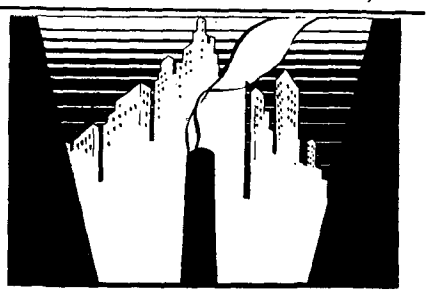
Our friend *esh* writes us saying:

> In the first few pages of "Susan Spray," *Miss Kaye-Smith* tells us how the father of a family of eight earned nine shillings a week, and a loaf of bread cost two shillings. I have been wondering just what they lived on!

Please take the following to your hearts:

***Marcus Graham* of Stelton, New Jersey, if *Jimmy Walker* fails, knows that *Tom Mooney* is still waiting for justice to be done him. Mr. Graham wishes to make a transcontinental tour to speak on the subject of "Who is Responsible for the Continued Imprisonment of Tom Mooney and Warren K. Billings?" Any voluntary contributions raised at these meetings are to be forwarded by any arrangers of such meetings to the Tom Mooney Molders' Defense Committee, P. O. Box 1475L, San Francisco, California. All correspondence *re* dates and further details of the tour should be addressed to Marcus Graham, Stelton, New Jersey. It is only necessary for us to say that we believe the case of Tom Mooney to be one of the greatest miscarriages of justice in the history of this country.**

THE PHŒNICIAN.



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Signers and Magicians

AT some yet to be announced date in January, within a few short weeks of the bicentennial of Washington's birth, there will be sold at the American Art Association Anderson Galleries an Anglo-Saxon manuscript which antedates Chaucer by the approximate interval that Chaucer antedates Washington. The Blickling Homilies were produced sometime between the year 959 and the end of the tenth century — the date 971 appears clearly at one point. The churchly writer (or more probably writers) made due note of the iminence of the year 1000 and admitted he could see no good in the omen — the calendar had been getting along on a maximum of three digits as far back as anybody could remember and any attempt to improve the technical posititon would be bound to result in a disastrous bear raid.

Until the arrival of the Blickling Homilies for disposal there was no Anglo-Saxon manuscript in the United States in either public or private hands. Whether the Homilies will remain in the United States (which seems likely) and whether they will become a unit in a private or an institutional collection will be determined with the dispersal of the superb library of the Marquess of Lothian, which, in any event, will be the most important auction held in this country in the past three years—perhaps for a longer period.

A surpassing Psalter of about 1300 is another item of impressive moment. The name of its illuminator survives—he was Brother John Tikytt, or Tikyll, prior of the Augustinian monastery of Wyrkesopp—and the state of the manuscript offers pathetic testimony to the end of his own story. The first ninety leaves are elaborately and brilliantly illuminated; from ninety-one to 114 the decorations are either only partly finished or merely sketched in; from leaf 115 onward the spaces left for decorations and illuminated initials are blank. Good Brother John was called home before his pious masterpiece was completed, but this late and inquisitive age can turn his passing to good account. For the fact that examples of his work can be studied in every stage, from the first rough delineation to the completed illumination (he wrought in *lapis lazuli and gold and silver for the* glory of God), makes the Tikytt Psalter a living laboratory of medieval craftsmanship.

So important is the Lothian sale regarded that a somewhat extraneous but superlatively impressive item from another English source will be appended to the second evening's quota. While the details of this surprise lot have not been announced, it can be said that it is a document signed by no fewer than twenty of the fifty-six Signers of the Declaration of Independence — probably the largest single grouping of the company in existence with the exception of the original Declaration. Gwinnett and Lynch are not among the twenty, but *que voulez-vous?*

Mention of the Signers recalls the story, which seems never to have appeared in print, of how the late Harry Houdini almost acquired a set and what he had planned to do with it if he had acquired it. The set was the second-string collection of Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet. The qualification is not used disparagingly. The first-string Emmet set is now in the New York Public Library — it contains such a pearl of price as the only Lynch autograph letter known. Houdini wanted the set badly and bid up to twenty thousand dollars for it, for this was in the brave old days when twenty thousand dollars was not an utterly ridiculous bid for a set of Signers. But the set sold for a few thousand more, and Houdini went without it.

What he wanted to do with it was this: he planned to engage a college professsor, entrust the set to him (the examples were mounted in a thick folio volume), and send him around the country a week ahead of himself to give exhibitions and talks in public libraries. It would have been an admirable and dignified publicity program, and it is matter for regret that the price was a little too high to suit. But the idea is still worth adoption. Why shouldn't Charlie Chaplin's next picture be preceded by a display of Pickwick in parts or a run of Elizabethan dramatists? Did any comedy ever assay for a higher percentage of Chaplin than "Gammer Gurton's Needle?"

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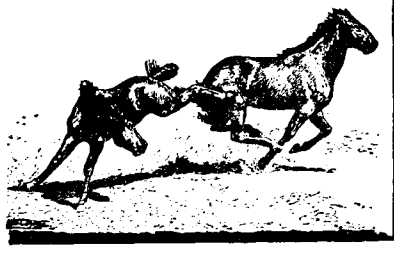

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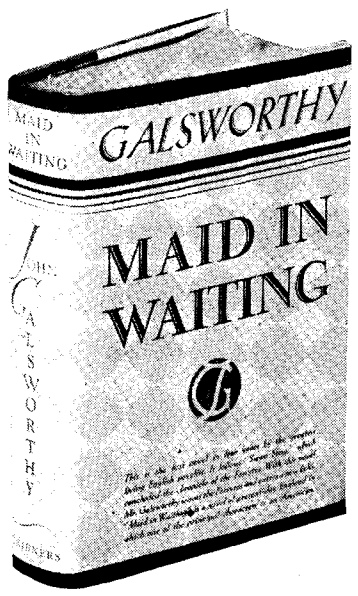

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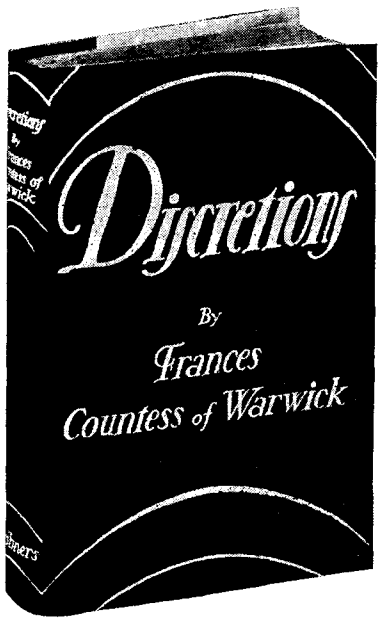

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